“One of these misty halos”

Joseph Conrad and the Subversion of the Adventure Story

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Abstract

Denne oppgaven undersøker hvordan Joseph Conrads tekster *Heart of Darkness* (1899) og *Lord Jim* (1900) destabiliserer trekk ved den typiske eventyrromanen, ('the adventure story') – en sjanger som var svært populær i Storbritannia på slutten av det nittende århundret. Som et eksempel på den typiske eventyrromanen, og som bakgrunn for å forklare hvordan Conrads tekster undergraver sjangeren, benytter jeg meg av H. Rider Haggard's svært populære *King Solomon's Mines* (1885).

Det første kapittelet belyser sjangerens forhistorie og hvordan denne typen eventyrroman, på grunn av sine fellstrekk med den langt mer respekterte sjangeren reiselitteratur, både oppnådde allmenn aksept og embetsmessig støtte på attenhundretallet. I forlengelsen av dette, viser jeg hvordan den typiske eventyrromanen på grunn av sin form og sin funksjon i det britiske samfunnet representerte imperialistisk diskurs.

Kapittel to tar for seg det jeg anser som et typisk eksempel på den offisielt støttede eventyrromanen, *King Solomon's Mines*. Jeg påpeker hvordan boka, både gjennom personkarakteristikker og fortellerteknikk, understøtter det rådende imperialistiske verdensbildet, hvor Europeernes 'siviliseringsoppdrag' i Afrika fremstilles både som ønskelig og vellykket.

I kapittel tre tar jeg for meg Conrads *Heart of Darkness* og viser hvordan denne korte romanen gjennom ulike subversive virkemiddel bryter med det sjangertypiske, både formalistisk, retorisk og tematisk. Jeg hevder at Conrad undergraver den typiske sjangerstrukturen hvor en helt reiser ut, nedkjemper en fiende og så vender hjem. Jeg viser også hvordan Conrad gjennom å komplisere fortellersituasjonen og ved å åpne for det Bakhtin kaller "dialogisme" utfordrer fortellerautoriteten, som i typiske eventyrromaner ofte ukritisk viderefører et imperialistisk verdensbilde.

I det fjerde og siste kapittelet viser jeg hvordan Conrad i *Lord Jim* forlenger sjangerbruddene fra *Heart of Darkness.* I denne romanen presenteres leseren også for heltehistorier som på ulike måter undergraver den typiske sjangerstrukturen. Jeg hevder at Jim representerer en hel generasjon idealistiske unge menn som definerer seg selv ut fra litterære forbilder, og at hans skjebne belyser hvilke konsekvenser en slik selvforståelse kan føre til i den virkelige verden.

I sin helhet belyser oppgaven hvordan Joseph Conrad i sine tekster bruker den typiske eventyrromanen på en helt ny måte. Gjennom å benytte imperialismens eget verktøy til å stille spørsmål ved dens vedtatte sannheter undergraver Conrads tekster verdensbildet som tillot kolonitidens grusomheter.

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Contents

Introduction

This thesis will explore how the destabilization and subversion of the traditional adventure story genre in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and *Lord Jim* (1900) provide a critique of imperialism from within.

The thesis question relies on the proposition that the adventure story genre was strongly linked to Great Britain's imperial project, and that the genre both served to spread the worldview of imperial discourse and to 'recruit' new colonizers from the ranks of the young men who read them. For this reason, my thesis will start with a chapter concerned with understanding how the link between a literary genre and the most treacherous political ideology of the nineteenth century came to exist.

In order to understand the manner and extent of the subversions in Conrad's text, I then in the second chapter describe what makes up the genre of the adventure story, using examples from H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), which is an iconic and widely read text in its own right. Chapters three and four make up the bulk of this thesis, as I proceed to explore subversive tactics Conrad employs in his stories, discussing what the effects of these are. By undermining order and introducing doubt, is Conrad merely destabilizing the genre of the adventure story or attempting to create new sense?

My manner of answering the questions posed will largely rely on a comparison and juxtaposition of the three chosen texts. My reason for including *Lord Jim* along with the symmetrical pair of *King Solomon's Mines* and *Heart of Darkness*, which to a much larger degree correspond to each other and invite comparison, is that I consider the subversions present in *Lord Jim* to be even larger, and to reach farther than those of the novella. Interestingly, Conrad wrote both texts at the same time, completing *Heart of Darkness* during a break from *Lord Jim*. While the destabilizations in *Heart of Darkness* unmask the 'civilizing mission' and the worldview that allowed it to happen, the subversions in *Lord Jim*, challenge the very concept of heroism and the systemic cult surrounding it. In the process, these subversions expose both the genre *Lord Jim* ostensibly belongs to and the genre's intended effect on readers. I will return to the reasoning behind my text selection in the Method sub-section below.

First of all, I wish to introduce the historical and literary background against which the selected works should be seen, as well as give short presentations of the authors and their respective texts.

Historical Background

All three texts discussed in this thesis saw publication within a period of 15 years towards the very end of the nineteenth century – in what is known as the Victorian era. This term describes both the historic and literary era which in the common view coincides with the reign of Queen Victoria, who ruled from 1837 to her death in January 1901. As well as being a period of rising population, and paradoxically both increasing class divides and social reform in Britain, this was a period of great expansion for the British Empire abroad, perhaps culminating with the queen being crowned Empress of India in 1877.

In my first chapter, I sketch how the omnipresent imperialist worldview of this period was tied to the genre of the adventure story. In the beginning of the century, the expansion of Empire was a source of both pride and growing wealth. Otherwise, optimism also generally characterized the period, as the continued technological and scientific innovations both reduced mortality rates and improved living conditions and communications. Towards the end of the century, though, the way people understood themselves and the world around them changed radically due to the discoveries made by natural scientists such as Darwin and later the enquiry into psychological matters undertaken by Freud and other pioneers. The ideas of rationalism were slowly replaced by the notion of man as a thrall to his "subconscious" desires. This notion came to exert a very considerable influence on the universe of the modernist period that was to follow. Indeed, one of the reasons why Conrad's texts stand out from the literary climate of the time is that the psychological notions they express were avant-garde, prefiguring other modernist novels by a decade.

Towards the end of the Victorian era, the idea of colonialism was also becoming increasingly difficult to defend. By what right could the people of the colonies, now formally British citizens, be denied the rights fought for by social reform movements in the homeland? Additionally, the method used by the European powers in the "imperialist partitioning of Africa which dominated the final quarter of the nineteenth century" (Brantlinger, "Victorians and Africans" 166) upset many as reports began to trickle back. For the realities abroad did not correspond to the heroic British self-image propagated through travel literature and adventure stories.

British society at end of the Victorian era, then, seems ostensibly prosperous and thriving, but with undercurrents that would come to cause great upheavals in the coming years of the new century. Some of these undercurrents are evident in Conrad's work, perhaps most noticeable in Marlow's concern about the clash between idealism and realism and the appearance of an apparently ruthless capitalism in Belgian Congo.

Victorian Literature

A literary period is sometimes compared to a rope that is frayed in both ends, an image presumably meant to convey both that many threads work together to make up the whole, and that no literary period is discrete, with a clear beginning and a clear cut-off date (Rahn). The Victorian period in literature is no exception to this rule, encompassing both a significant time span and various literary movements overlapping with other eras.

One of the threads that make up the rope of the Victorian period is so-called realist fiction, of which George Eliot (the pen name of Mary Ann Evans) and Thomas Hardy may serve as examples. In realist fiction, the focus is on everyday events in the lives of the characters that, inside the realist fiction, represent ordinary men and women. Quite often, these novels would be political, or problem-orientated, or even openly critical of different aspects of Victorian society.

Another thread, gothic romances, continued to be popular, now being offered in more affordable so-called *Penny Dreadfuls*, something which no doubt contributed to their popularity, especially among the working classes. Charles Dickens, however, perhaps the most popular author of the first part of the Victorian era, managed to combine entertaining coming-of-age stories with realistic depictions of life in the lower classes, providing discussion of contemporary social problems like poverty or bad working conditions.

A third thread in the rope of the Victorian literature was the enormous growth of children's literature. The Victorian era's ambiguous notions of childhood, where the concept of the child was idealized in theory, while many real children had to suffer "floggings, malnutrition, and the like" in practice might seem paradoxical or cruel today. Nonetheless, enormous amounts of books were written for children. Often these books were didactic in nature, and then typically intended to guide the youth towards the right life-choices, and teach them the correct way of facing hardship (Walther).

The final two intertwined threads that make up the rope of the Victorian literature are the objects of discussion for the next chapters. Although the hands-on experience of imperialism was something only a small group of European society experienced, the general public could follow the explorers, and read about the exciting new discoveries of faraway lands in magazines and books. They could also read about the strange (and more often than not 'primitive') people and customs encountered there, in stories both factual and imagined.

In fact, as I will argue in the first chapter, the literary production of the time – both factual *travel literature* and imagined *adventure stories* – constitute a crucial instrument for the continued expansion of empire. These were the stories by which the public's opinions

were formed – and for the successful proliferation of the colonial system, an approving public was a necessity. It is thus important to study these stories.

Conrad's books were published just as the tide was about to turn for imperialist ideology in Britain. While the prior colonial effort had tended to be viewed primarily as a glorious enterprise for all of Britain, and an excellent career opportunity for able young men, reports from these 'outposts of progress' began to trickle back and fuel a growing suspicion with the imperial administrators and the way the colonies were governed. Interestingly, "An Outpost of Progress" (1897) is also the name of Conrad's short story that details the gradual moral and physical degeneration of two European men stationed at an outpost in Congo. The story deals with many of the same themes as *Heart of Darkness* and prefigures the imperialist critique of Conrad's novella (see Lothe, 2014). Needless to say, neither the short story nor the novella presents an appealing view of the career opportunities present in colonial administration. Put differently, the question I will answer in thesis is: In what way do the destabilizations present in Conrad's work serve to introduce an element of doubt into a genre that had been so certain of itself, anticipating the change that was about to happen, both in politics and literature?

While Conrad's proto-empire-criticism soon was joined by theoretical critics such as John Hobson, whose *Imperialism* (1902), proved influential, some years would pass before fellow literary writers like Virginia Woolf, George Orwell and E.M Forster would criticize the colonial effort in literature. To extend the metaphor from the beginning of this sub-section, Conrad's thread exists in the frays where the ropes of Modernism and Victorianism meet, but whether his thread properly belongs in the rope of Victorian literature or the rope of Modernism, or maybe both, I leave to others to decide.

The Authors

H. Rider Haggard was born a year before Conrad, in 1856, in Norfolk, England as the eight child of a barrister father and a poet mother. After having financed private education for their older sons, it seems the Haggard family could ill afford such for young Henry. Haggard failed his army entrance exam and at the age of 19 his father sent him to South Africa to serve as an unpaid assistant secretary to the governor of Natal, Sir Henry Bulwer. He would spend his next years in South Africa. After some time he transferred to the staff of Special Commissioner Theophilus Shepstone and consequently got to see the British annexation of Transvaal from within.

Haggard started writing after returning to England in 1882. Rather than building on his own experiences as registrar of the High Court in Natal however, he drew on the life stories of the adventurers he met there. His fascination with the native cultures and the recent archeological unearthing of ancient ruined cities also found its way into his books. Though he had had a few novels published before, the publication of *King Solomon's Mines* in 1885 afforded him his first great success. In the following years, he would continue to write adventure stories in a similar vein, some featuring the same protagonists as *King Solomon's Mines*.

That Joseph Conrad would come to be counted among the most recognized English language writers of the twentieth century was far from a given, as English was his third language, acquired later in life after Polish and French. Paradoxically for a man who saw the outskirts of the colonial world through nineteen years as a mariner, and who wrote so many stories concerned with sailors and the maritime life, Conrad was born far from the sea in land-locked Podolia. Today this region is part of Ukraine, but at the time of his birth, in 1857, it was governed by the Polish gentry to which his parents belonged, though occupied by Russia.

Conrad was orphaned at the age of eleven when his father succumbed to the same illness that had killed his mother four years earlier, tuberculosis. For that reason, his uncle was the one who set Conrad up as a sailor at the age of 16, after the young man, though well-read, showed no particular inclination for school. Conrad's dream of going to sea, like for many young boys at the time, seems to have been inspired by reading both travel literature including Leopold McClintock's *The Voyage of the 'Fox' in the Arctic Seas*, in French translation as well as well as adventure stories for boys by James Fennimore Cooper and Captain Frederick Marryat (Najder 41-42).

Though he was granted British nationality in 1886 (and managed to rid himself of his unwanted Russian citizenship three years later), Conrad nonetheless seems to have retained some sense of his Polish identity, and to have continued to view himself as an outsider to Britain. This may have facilitated his ability to recognize also the negative aspects of his adopted homeland. Additionally, being born in an area occupied by the expansionist Russian Empire, Conrad, unlike his British peers, knew something about what imperialism looked and felt like on the receiving end. His father, a political activist as well as a poet and playwright, took part in the Polish resistance against the Russian Empire and was made to suffer for it. Conrad's father was exiled to Vologda, some 500 kilometers north of Moscow, where the small family lived for close to a year. The harsh climate cannot have improved his parents' physical condition, and Conrad too would suffer from ill health through life (Najder 19-20).

Conrad's stories often include literary embellished versions of characters or events from his previous life as a sailor. Moreover, unlike Haggard, Conrad was never part of the colonial administration, instead always viewing it from the point of view of the man of the sea. His first novel *Almayer's Folly* was published in 1895, and *An Outcast of the Islands* followed in 1896, both set in south-east Asia, and earning him a reputation as a teller of exciting tales set in exotic locales.

The Selected Works

Sometimes a work of art becomes so well-known and influential that it is hard to imagine what the world would look like without it. In their own ways, both Henry Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* can be described to have had and continue to have such momentous influence.

Traces of *King Solomon's Mines*, and the formula it perfected, are prevalent both in numerous "lost-world" books and in new Hollywood blockbusters each year. Its elegant quest structure comes very close to what I would call a proto-adventure, pitting heroic individuals against both the elements and the unscrupulous evil of man, finally overcoming both challenges through daring feats and courageous good cheer. Even though some see the book as "comfort food", or light entertainment that does not provide its readers with any intellectual challenge, confirming stereotypes rather than expanding horizons, its enormous mass appeal in itself makes it significant and an interesting object of study.

In addition to being much read, *Heart of Darkness* must rank high among the literary works receiving the most critical attention during the last century. The novella has variously been subjected to psychological, feminist, racial, political, and a range of other readings. Achebe's famous indictment of Conrad's literary treatment of Africans, and its various rebuttals or qualifiers have served to make *Heart of Darkness* central to the postcolonial studies that have been so important during the late twentieth century. Remarkably, *Heart of Darkness* has been the object of constant renewal of interest as Conrad's ambiguous, modernist novella has attracted various interpretations for more than 100 years.

Lord Jim, though not nearly as popular as its predecessor among college professors or critics, furthers much of what Conrad started in *Heart of Darkness*. Both in terms of modernist prose and narrative organization as well as in undermining official imperial discourse, *Lord Jim* expands on the prior work. I think the novel lends itself well to be considered in the company of the two other texts, foregrounding as it does aspects of framing and genre, and subverting the traditional adventure story on a deeper level.

Selected Critics

For a student attempting to get a grasp of what critics have said about Conrad's books, the multitude of criticism seems daunting. The question of how Conrad's work relates to the contemporary imperialism has been handled by many writers, including Chinua Achebe, Edward W. Said, Patrick Brantlinger, David Spurr and more recently Michael Valdez Moses. Likewise, the relationship between Conrad's work and the adventure story or imperial romance has been written about by Andrea White, Linda Dryden and Daphna Erdinast Vulcan, to name a few. Their ideas have all been part of shaping and modifying my own, and they will join us through this thesis, sometimes as contrasting voices, other times as shoulders to stand on.

While *King Solomon's Mines*, and H. Rider Haggard's work in general has been the object of fewer critical enquiries than Conrad's, there are two critical essays that have been especially useful for me in this thesis. In addition to White, who dedicates a chapter to *King Solomon's Mines* in her study, Richard F. Patteson has written about the link between imperialism and narrative structure in the book, finding it to be a "nearly 'pure' example" of the genre (113). I tend to agree

My understanding of travel writing through the ages, and the points at which it intersects with the traditional adventure story in the middle of the nineteenth's century is indebted to Tim Youngs' excellent *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*. Along with Andrea White's in-depth study *Joseph Conrad and the Adventure Tradition* this volume has been invaluable background information in writing the first chapter detailing the rise of the adventure story, as well as supplying me with ideas for looking into how the two genres of travel writing and adventure story interact and the possibility of tracing the influence of one in the other. Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* has also been helpful in enabling me to better understand the social structures and ideas that have informed this type of writing. Bakhtin also provides insights, and his idea of the *chronotope,* and his notions of what constitutes the classic Greek adventure story have been helpful in attempting to link the ancient quest and its post-industrial equivalent.

Genre

Since much of my thesis deals with how Conrad subverts the *genre* of the nineteenth century adventure story, and since genre is a notoriously difficult and elusive term, some clarification is in order. Over the next few pages I will lay out the main ideas that have informed my understanding of genre. These ideas will serve as the foundation on which I build my answer

to the thesis statement. Though I am not blind to the problematic nature of defining a text by its perceived genre, the need for a model to do so quickly presents itself when trying to explain how Conrad through his novels introduced new elements into the adventure story. In doing so, Conrad subverted imperial notions that were usually allowed to stand unopposed both in that particular genre and in the public discourse of his time.

My working model of genre comes from John Frow's book *Genre*. Appropriating Frow's definition, in this thesis I consider genre as a "set of conventional and highly organized constraints on the production and interpretation of meaning" (10). While the word "constraints" includes connotations of forced limitation that could seem off-putting, I think some restriction is necessary to be able to speak of genres at all. However, genres are not static, and it is exactly the dynamism of genre – that a genre can change or expand as new texts become linked to it – that fascinates me. In this way, a genre serves as scaffolding rather than a fence, or in Frow's phrase, as "frameworks for constructing meaning and value" (72). While Haggard and Conrad relied on the same framework their end results became very different, as I will show in this thesis.

In order to describe what constitutes a genre, I will use Frow's model. In this model, each genre is related to a historically variable repertoire of features, which can be defined in terms of three dimensions: the formal, the rhetorical and the thematic. These dimensions should not be seen as discrete entities, but rather to overlap. It is also important to keep in mind that the relationships between these three dimensions are unequal and unfixed, and that the descriptions of different genres tend to foreground different dimensions. While poems tend to be described by their formal dimension (a haiku or sonnet for example) other genres, or genres at other points in time, may be more accurately represented by focusing on the other dimensions. Since each genre has a "characteristic constellation" in each of the three areas (77), I will appropriate Frow's notion of the three dimensions to show what constitutes the adventure story genre, and why I find *King Solomon's Mines* to be such a good illustration of it.

I think adventure stories, like much of what we commonly refer to as *genre fiction* (science fictions, Westerns, and romance novels to name a few) to a large degree can be described by their thematic dimension. For this discussion I find the concept of "generic worlds", which Frow credits Peter Seitel for, to be useful for understanding what constitutes the typical thematic content for a genre. Using this concept, each "world" can be seen to have the dimensions of "space, time, categories of actors and settings, causality, and motivation – and the interpretation they call for" (Seitel, qtd. in Frow 86). Frow cites examples of possible

generically projected worlds, like the world of the Petrarchan sonnet or the world of the television sitcom, and this leads me to ponder what would be part of the generically projected world of the adventure story. I will present my thoughts on this issue in the chapter on *King Solomon's Mines*.

Above, I stated that I am interested in the way genres can change or expand. For my understanding of how this occurs I have found Ralph Cohen's introduction to *Theorizing Genres I* useful. Cohen states that "to refer to a genre is to refer to a group of texts which have both some features in common and others which are individualized" (vi). This quote suggests that each and every text linked to a genre contains a combination of these features. While some of the features serve to make a genre relatively stable, other features instead loosen the stability (ibid.). Logic would deem that the more the individualized features outweigh the common ones the more tenuous the genre connection becomes. However, what was once individualized features might in time be used again by other texts and as a result become common features later on.

Cohen claims that the variation of features that "members" of a given genre display over time tends to "weaken, but not cancel membership", seeing this phenomenon as the reason why it is possible for texts to belong to more than one genre. More importantly for my thesis, this mechanic may also explain the shifting fortunes a genre may experience over time. For a genre can not only change, it can also cease to be used completely. In time, a "dead" or little used genre can also be revitalized (Cohen: vi). Revitalization can occur as a result of many factors. Cohen quotes Alistair Fowler who lists "new world discoveries, images of exotic places, and development of print cultures" as reasons for the revival of "several ancient genres" (vi). Frow presents a compatible notion when he states that genres are *overdetermined* by social values and conflicts and that each genre at a given time is a part of a shifting hierarchy of genres (68). Both Fowler's and Frow's points here play directly into my first chapter, where I aim to show how the adventure story, maybe the oldest of genres, was revived and enjoyed a brief rise to elevated status within the genre hierarchy during the nineteenth century as, at least partly, a result of social and political factors.

The third aspect of genre that is central to my thesis is how genre is signalled through texts**.** Frow suggests that neither author nor reader have the power to fix a genre onto a text, saying that the generic status of a particular text is something "readers and writers negotiate" (109). However, there are some ways in which an author can link his text to a perceived genre, and this becomes important for this thesis, since this is something Conrad utilizes to subvert the traditional adventure story genre. Partly, the author's claim to a genre is signalled

by what Frow calls "external clues". The sub-appellation afforded *Lord Jim: A Tale*, or Quatermain's dedicating "this faithful but unpretending record of a remarkable adventure […] to all the big and little boys who read it" (Haggard 3) are good examples of this. These "external clues" activate particular expectations in the readers, which can then either be fulfilled, as in *King Solomon's Mines* or, undermined, as Conrad does in his works.

But these clues are not only signalled externally. Each genre frames the world in a certain way, and Frow suggests that the reader typically only notices this framing at "its intersections with other subcultures of meaning" (93). I think the subversive quality of *Heart of Darkness* becomes evident in the intersection between the pro-imperialist rhetoric employed by almost everybody Marlow meets, from his aunt at the beginning of the story to the journalist at the end, and Marlow's ironic telling of his experiences going up the Congo River. In *Lord Jim* Conrad also plays with framing. Here the different segments of Jim's life before and after the central meeting with Marlow are framed within different subcultures of meaning. The shifts between these different subcultures certainly make the readers notice the difference that framing can put on a story, and in its own way this narrative variation contributes to the destabilization of the imperial discourse. I will discuss this issue in detail in chapter 4.

Narrative Theory

In the interest of avoiding equivocal language, and because some of these terms have come to be defined in many ways, by many scholars over the years, I will start by defining the most important terms I will be using in this thesis.

By *author* I mean the factual, historical person credited with writing the work in question, in this case this will primarily be used to speak of Conrad and Haggard and their authorial marks on their respective texts.

The *narrator* refers to the person within the textual universe that narrates the story. In *King Solomon's Mines* Quatermain fulfils this role. In *Heart of Darkness* the situation is more complex, because of the existence of a frame narrator, who sets the scene and sometimes comments during Marlow's breaks in his narration. Importantly, it is also the frame narrator who passes on Marlow's story to the reader. In *Lord Jim*, the situation is even more complex, as a distant and omniscient third-person narrator describes an oral storytelling situation, involving both Marlow and what may be called the "privileged listener", and later also narrates as the privileged listener receives letters from Marlow. As in *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow is also in this book the narrative nexus: He recounts his encounters with Jim, first as a

story in a parlour, and then in letters sent to the privileged man who attended the previous storytelling situation "more than two years" earlier.

Method

I will begin this section by picking up my explanation of why I chose three texts rather than two, missing out on the symmetry offered by studying either the first two, or the last two primary texts under consideration in this thesis, when either option would provide plentiful opportunities for interesting critical exploration.

First, while there are some studies that contrast *Heart of Darkness* with the traditional adventure story represented by *King Solomon's Mines*, and while there are multiple studies that attempt to trace the similarities and differences between Conrad's two texts, I have found very few critical attempts to study the three of them together. My hope is therefore that the combination of these three texts will offer the opportunity for more original critical insights, and that the uncommon juxtaposition will draw attention to other areas than those often covered.

Second, I think the inclusion of *Lord Jim* strengthens the link between the historical realities of the colonial period and the treatment of them in literature. In *Lord Jim* there is to my mind a self-consciousness of its 'genreness' within the text itself. This kind of self-consciousness informs both the narrative and the acts of the protagonists of the story, casting the entire adventure-story genre in a different light.

My method in discussing the thesis statement will primarily involve giving a close reading of the three primary texts, coupled with a discussion of how both the wholes and select passages from the various texts relate to what I regard as typical traits of the genre of the adventure story. In my close reading I will mainly stay on the sentence level, but I will sometimes stop to consider certain words, especially if they appear ambiguous or equivocal as indeed often is the case with Conrad's work. Sometimes I will offer an alternative reading to the more obvious one; an example of this is the unsettled relationship between Marlow and the cannibals in *Heart of Darkness* which I attempt to deconstruct.

In order to cast Conrad's subversions into relief, the need presented itself for a textual foil or counterpart. Rather than using a schema, trying to abstract the typical traits (Vladimir's Propp's formal analysis of folktales could be one possibility as a model), I have chosen to draw on what is commonly seen as one of the foremost proponents of the genre, H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*, as a real historic example of the adventure story genre in

use. To my mind, this is the better approach, as a writer trying to fit an abstract theoretical framework onto a book runs the risk of reductionism, by voluntarily or unconsciously avoiding addressing the components that do not 'fit'. By seeing and comparing the texts as their own entities, rather than just a list of traits, I am able to include a short discussion of some subversive elements of *King Solomon's Mines*, a novel not usually credited with having such. Thus I aim to show that no text simply *inhabits* its genre, but rather should be seen as both a use and an advancement of it. In addition, as both the formation of the genre of adventure story and the background for the subversions relate so closely to the actual historical events and the society of the books' contemporary world, I will also endeavour to place the books and their content, be it typical or critical of their present day, into a historical context.

As I suggested above, Conrad scholarship is a wide field, and both *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim* have been the subject of excellent studies before. In my own work with these texts I of course draw on the research of others, but I want to stress the importance of White's *Joseph Conrad and the Adventure Tradition* as a main theoretical reference. While disconcerted to find that much of what I had noticed and found interesting in my prior readings of Conrad's book had already been treated with erudition and care by White, leaving me to kick in open doors, I eventually decided on exploring some of the doors she leaves just slightly ajar, attempting to create a productive dialogue between her own work and mine. An example of this is White's suggestion that the story arcs of both Marlow, Kurtz and Jim represent explorations of the possible different trajectories an adventure story hero's live may take. By suggesting different character arcs than the standard one where the hero meets with a happy ending, Conrad challenges the notions of the traditional story of the nineteenth century. This is an idea that I attempt to expand and use to explain some of the other sub-stories we are presented with in *Lord Jim.*

Recapitulation of the Thesis Statement and Short Overview of What Is to Come

To recapitulate, my overarching thesis statement is: In which ways can Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim* be seen to subvert the genre of the adventure story and undermine imperial discourse? The answer to this question requires addressing some interrelated questions beforehand, and the structure of my thesis is organized accordingly. My aim is that each chapter should both answer one of these interrelated questions, outlined below, and provide the necessary background for understanding the next chapter. Thus, each

succeeding chapter builds on the previous ones, leading up to a conclusion at the end of this text.

The questions that inform the very first chapter include: What is the relationship between the adventure story and imperial discourse? Why can a destabilization of the first influence the other? I will attempt to trace a short history of the adventure story, sketching some of the literary and societal circumstances that are connected to the genre's rise and its new significance in the nineteenth century. This first chapter provides necessary background in order to understand the form that Conrad's criticism of the exploitive imperialist system takes. By undermining the central tenets of the imperialist worldview and subverting the stories on which the larger public's acceptance of imperialism relied, Conrad is effectively attacking imperialism where the chance is largest of bringing about a change: In the hearts and minds of the reading public. By dedicating a chapter to the literary-historical phenomenon of the adventure story, my aim is to provide a better understanding of a genre that often has been given short shrift in criticism. While some may say that this matter could very well be addressed in this introduction, I think the bestowal of a full chapter, though short, is the best way to introduce elements of the genre and notions of the period that are either expressed or subverted in the works discussed later.

The question that serves as the starting point for the second chapter is equally essential in building understanding of the genre Conrad's texts subverted. What constitutes the typical adventure story? In answering this, examples from Haggard's seminal *King Solomon's Mines* will be central to my discussion, serving as a typical proponent of the adventure story genre and its imperial worldview. I analyze the book using Frow's model of genre, describing the features of all three dimensions: formal, rhetorical and thematic. This chapter originally started as part of a larger first chapter providing background for Conrad's work. However, in working with the text, I found that Haggard's book deserves a somewhat expanded discussion, since it provides its own small subversions of the genre it so well represents. For that reason, *King Solomon's Mines,* and its narrator Allan Quatermain, will in this thesis both provide a foil for Conrad's book and Marlow's narration, and be the subject of some short discussion on its own merits as a subversive text.

The main subject I want to explore in this thesis, however, is Conrad's work, and for that reason the second chapter is relatively short. While I sometimes could have wished for more room to discuss individual quotations from *King Solomon's Mines*, this need for space becomes even more imperative when it comes to Conrad's work, and in order to keep the

discussion within the limits of a master's thesis, Conrad has been given precedence. After having discussed what I see as the necessary background in the first two chapters, I attempt to answer my thesis question in the final two chapters, tracing and detailing some of Conrad's subversive tactics across *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*.

Focusing on *Heart of Darkness*, chapter three will explore how typical formal, rhetorical and thematic features of the adventure story in the previous chapter are destabilized or subverted in Conrad's work. My hope is that the frequent comparisons with the relatively straightforward *King Solomon's Mines* serve to highlight the destabilizations found in *Heart of Darkness*. I will look at Conrad's subversion of the quest structure, contrasting Marlow's tentative journey with the 'perfect' symmetrical quest found in *Heart of Darkness*. I compare the worldview and notions of Englishness presented by the two texts. Finally, I will explore what effects the style of narration has on the story being told, by comparing *Heart of Darkness*'s Marlow with *King Solomon's Mines*' Quatermain. Since an attempted catalogue of the myriad small and great subversions found in *Heart of Darkness* would be far outside the scope of this thesis, I have selected those I consider as the most interesting departures in *Heart of Darkness*, and endeavour to discuss these in some detail.

In the fourth chapter, *Lord Jim* is the primary object of scrutiny. In many ways the novel expands and elaborates on what Conrad did in *Heart of Darkness*, but it also introduces many new ways of subversion, and I argue that it is a far more complex text than *Heart of Darkness*. In this chapter I will take a step back from the direct comparisons between Conrad and Haggard, and instead investigate the way Conrad plays with narration and framing, how he subverts the standard adventure hero story by surrounding it with alternate trajectories. Finally, I will consider the influence of the adventure story as an entity within the story itself, serving both to provide heroic ideals and as a way of organizing life.

In my conclusion I draw together the threads from the discussions contained in the preceding chapters to see if the conclusions from the separate chapters, when held together, improve our understanding of how Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim* relate to the genre of the adventure story. What are the effects of the destabilizations and subversions taking place? I suggest that Conrad's work both relies on and undermines the notions which supported European imperialism, and in the process expands the boundaries of what could be done with the adventure story genre, paving the way for a new way of writing about the imperial effort in less than celebratory terms.

Chapter 1

The Journey

The History of the Adventure Story

In keeping with the many travel writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who prefaced their narratives by an apology for the text's literary shortcomings, I will start this chapter with an acknowledgment of my inadequacies. But rather than apologizing for my lack of erudition, I want to warn the reader of the simplifications required by the constraints of a thesis such as this. This first chapter, intended to serve as background for my later argument, is best read as just that – a summary of the parts of the history of the genre of the adventure story and its cousin travel writing that I deem relevant and illuminating for answering the thesis question. It should by no means be read as a complete account. Although I have attempted to do right by my sources, the very nature of a highly condensed overview such as this requires a selective focus and unfortunately a fair amount of generalization, which inevitably incurs loss of complexity.

This chapter will map out the history of the adventure story genre, from its pre-literary past obscured by the mists of time, up into the present day. In accordance with my thesis question, the particular time period of most interest to me is the nineteenth century. It was at this time that the adventure story, replete with borrowed features from the genre of travel literature, for the first time in a long while gained that most ambiguous of commodities, official political acceptance (or even endorsement). Consequently, this period is where most of my effort and words will be spent. The main question that governs this chapter is the inquiry into the nature of the relationship between the adventure story genre and imperialism in Britain. Leading up to that, though, I wish to make a few comments on important developments in the genre, relating them to the primary texts studied in this thesis.

The Quest Structure –an Organizing Device of Wide Appeal

In the time-honoured tradition of storytellers everywhere, let us start by going backwards. The adventure story is by no means a modern invention. Nor is the quest structure, whose appeal appears to be universal. This particular story configuration is found in myths and folktales from all around the world, and in one of the earliest texts known by mankind, the Sumerian epic *Gilgamesh*, first written down close to 4000 years ago. The story of *Gilgamesh* follows

the protagonist of the same name as he along with his friend undertakes a journey through a perilous forest forbidden to men, in search of ancestral wisdom and ultimately immortality. Along the way they fight both demons and monsters, and Gilgamesh suffers the death of his friend Enkidu. Though he finds the gods, his search for immortality ultimately proves futile, leaving him to return to his homeland to take up his role as king. It appears that the three-pronged quest structure with its journey into the unknown, the defeat of adversaries, and return home was in place four millennia ago.

Possibly the quest structure should not be seen to belong to any particular genre. Maybe it instead should be understood as a way of organizing existence that for some psychological reason or other appeals enormously to us humans and thus underlies most human storytelling. However, I would argue that the formula that governs the typical quest is found in its most visible, or exposed form in the genre of the adventure story. These stories, after all, often follow the structure of going somewhere, overcoming something, and then returning home.

The travel motif, or the "journey pattern" (Youngs 4) that lies at the heart of travel literature, is closely related to the quest structure. Tim Youngs, in his *Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing,* calls this pattern "one of the most persistent forms of all narratives (ibid.). Indeed, the genre of travel writing and the adventure story appear to have a shared past. In his thoughtful and thought-provoking study, Youngs traces the roots of travel writing not only to factual but also mythological travels in the ancient world. He finds the roots of travel writing in "the factual record, as well as the mythical, the legendary and the ancient epics" (19). Among the precursors of modern travel writing he sees *The Odyssey* and *the The Argonautica*, as well as the previously mentioned *Gilgamesh*. While Youngs argues that these texts provide many of the features of the genre of travel writing, I think their thematic concerns – "terrible danger, exotic 'others', fantastic creatures and sexual longing' (20) – make their inclusion among the canon of the adventure story genre equally viable. While modern travel writing and the adventure story each constitute their own genre, they appear to spring from the same source.

The Early History of the Adventure Story

In his essay on the *chronotope*, Mikhail Bakhtin speaks of both the adventure story and travel writing at the time of Ancient Greece, using examples written between the second and sixth century A.D. Even though I have just argued in favour of the idea of their shared past, a separation between the two genres appears to have occurred by this time. What Bakhtin refers

to as the "ancient travel novel", appear to have developed its own genre characteristics separate from the contemporary representative of the adventure story genre, the "Greek romance". Bakhtin states that the ancient travel novel's conception of the world bears little resemblance to the world of the Greek romance. While the entire world is alien and unknown in the latter, the travel novels centres on the "author's own real homeland, which serves as organizing centre for the point of view, the scales of comparison, the approaches and evaluations determining how alien countries are seen and understood (103). Keep this in mind, as it will be elaborated in the next section, detailing the history of travel literature.

Unlike the Greek travel writing genre, where the narrative nexus is firmly placed in the author's homeland, Bakhtin claims that abstractness and the conception of the world as alien are a necessity for the adventure story genre.

> The world of the Greek romance is an alien world, everything it is indefinite, unknown, foreign. Its heroes are there for the first time; they have no organic ties or relationships with it; the laws governing the sociopolitical and everyday life of this world are foreign to them, they do not know them; in this world, therefore, they can experience only random contingency. (101)

Unlike the later adventure stories, The Greek romance cannot exoticize the foreign lands its protagonist moves through. Rather than contrasting the foreign with something native, as for example Quatermain does in *King Solomon's Mines*, the adventure story at this time portrays a world where everything is alien. Whereas the author-explorer of travel writing often sets out with a plan, Bakhtin sees the protagonist of the adventure story as a pawn in "the game of fate". In adventure stories, chance is what furthers the plot, not the agency of the protagonist. In the chronotope of the adventure story genre, Bakhtin claims, persons are forever having things happening to them, rather than being the instigators of events. In his words, a "purely adventuristic person is a person of chance" (95).

The other important characteristic of the adventure story is the use of what Bakhtin dubs "adventure time". This can be described as an organizing principle where short adventure segments are linked by the use of sentence adverbs like "suddenly", "at just that moment" or similar constructions, omitting long stretches of time when no noteworthy actions occur. These notions of Bakhtin will be important both to describe the traditional adventure story in the next chapter by applying them to *King Solomon's Mines*, and to express the subversions of *Heart of Darkness* in chapter three.

In accordance with Bakhtin's claim that nothing essential has been added to the adventures story since the time of the Greek or Sophist novels (87), I am going to jump ahead

to the point where the adventure story intersects with modern travel literature, skipping about a thousand years, where forms like the medieval chivalric romances represented the high-brow and folk tales the colloquial continuation of the adventure story form and the quest structure. By the end of the sixteenth century, though, the adventure story was a form that had fallen out of fashion for the literary elites. I argue that the adventure story's rise to fame again in colonial Britain has much to do with its intersection with the travel literature that had taken another route, and that had seen an enormous increase in popularity with the dawn of European circumnavigations and exploration by sea.

The History of Travel Writing

Returning to the genre of travel writing, I want to back up a little bit and provide a definition. While the genre's past seems intertwined with that of the adventure story, travel writing had taken on its own life by the era of exploration and imperialism. While travel writing certainly, in common with all literary genres, is very hard to define, Tim Young's "guiding principle" from *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, is as good as any. For Youngs, "travel writing consists of predominantly factual, first-person prose accounts of travels that have been undertaken by the author-narrator" (3).

Youngs sees the author's "visitor status" as a crucial element. The narrator is the reader's surrogate in the new country, "a cultural outsider who moves into, through and finally beyond the places and events encountered" (7). The foregrounding of a narrator is a typical trait of travel writing, as is the use of the homeland, or maybe rather home culture, as the standard against which the unknown is measured and evaluated. This home-centred point of view was, as Bakhtin notes above, present already in the Greek travel novel, and it also becomes very important in the traditional adventure story of the nineteenth century, as exemplified by *King Solomon's Mines*. While one of the forebears of travel writing was concerned with "factual information to help the traveller" (Youngs 20), exemplified by journals detailing navigational routes, modern travel books may best be seen as vehicles whose main purpose is to introduce us to the unfamiliar, the "other" (Youngs 9).

While travel literature and its antecedents can be traced back several millennia, the genre's popularity rose enormously around the time of Europe's rediscovery of the 'New World' and the imperialist expansion that followed. The vast majority of people would never leave their European homelands to see the territories abroad for themselves. To these people, travel books gave, in Mary Lousie Pratt's words, "a sense of ownership, entitlement and

familiarity with respect to the distant parts of the world that were being explored, invaded, invested in, and colonized" (3).

In Pratt's book-length study detailing the links between travel writing and imperialism, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation,* 1735 is a significant year. On the one hand, Pratt considers the La Condamine Expedition that set out that year as the beginning of the European imperial powers move towards interior exploration. This was a crucial turn away from the earlier "navigations", which had mainly been concerned with charting coastlines. By moving inland the explorer's came into contact with the original inhabitants of the 'discovered' country, a venture which demanded and gave rise to "new forms of European knowledge and self-knowledge" (23). It is not insignificant that both *King Solomon's Mines* and *Heart of Darkness* detail expeditions into the interior of Africa.

On the other hand, the year 1735 is important for the publication of Swedish botanist Linne's classificatory *System of Nature,* which Pratt sees ushering in the era of *scientific travel writing*. Rather than provide "navigational narrative" and "civic description", or more sensationalist stories of surviving shipwrecks, travel writing would now become concerned by the mapping out of the surface areas of earth. The role of the European scientist grew immensely. He could now produce order out of chaos by specifying "plants and animals in visual terms as discrete entities, subsuming and reassembling them in a finite totalizing order of European making" (Pratt 37). The unfortunate European tendency, described among others by Edward W. Said, to imprint European cultural supremacy on the African continent and its people through language starts here. As will be apparent from later chapters, this sort of 'scientific', classificatory discourse about both landscape and humans found its way into the genre of the adventure story as well, and the narration of Quatermain, who seems to consider himself something of a scientist, serves as a prime example. This will again be detailed in the next chapter.

Although the scientific revolution resulted in an enormous amount of books, the older traditions of travel literature did not disappear completely. The survival stories, including "first person stories of shipwrecks, castaways, mutinies, abandonments and (the special inland version) captivities" (Pratt 84), became more available than ever thanks to mass print culture. Significant portions of the reading public probably preferred this "lowbrow sensationalism" to the "bourgeois authority" of the new scientific travel books which tended to distance themselves from that sort of anecdotal narratives (ibid.) In addition, some of the themes and style of the older form survived in what Pratt calls *sentimental travel writing*. In actual fact, what Mary Louise Pratt's describes in her book may best be seen as a split into two different

sorts of travel writing from the middle of the eighteenth century: *scientific* and *sentimental* travel writing.

While in the next chapter I will provide examples of how Quatermain's narrative style in *King Solomon's Mines* is influenced by the style of the scientific explorer-writers of the preceding century, the link between the adventure story genre and the sentimental mode of travel writing is to my mind equally strong. In addition, I think the link between the two genres becomes more reciprocal when considering sentimental travel writing. While Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* provides an example of the adventure story influenced by the style of travel literature, Mungo Park does the opposite, offering a travel book that employs features of the adventure story.

Pratt sees Park's *Travels in the interior districts of Africa* (1799) as one of the most important proponents of the sentimental type of travel writing, where the narrative moves away from ostensibly scientific descriptions towards a text where the sensory experiences of an observer is the focal point. Pratt writes: "Sentimental writing explicitly anchors what is being expressed in the sensory experience, judgments, agency or desires of the human subjects. Authority lies in the authenticity of somebody's felt presence." Rather than focusing on the systematization of nature, Mungo Park writes about the people he meets. Pratt notices how there is no landscape description at all, and nature is present only insofar as it "impinges on the social world" (74). And although it opens with the by now customary apology that will be discussed in the next chapter, Park's book is not an unvarnished tale. Pratt shows how there is a large amount of self-construction happening, to the point where Park's narrative voice might as well have been found in a contemporary adventure story. In Pratt's words, Park

> wrote, and wrote himself, not as a man of science, but as a sentimental hero. He made himself the protagonist and central figure of his own account, which takes the form of an epic series of trials, challenges and encounters with the unpredictable. (73)

It seems that by the nineteenth century, the related genres of adventure story and travel literature had once again approached each other. The relationship between these genres and the imperialist project during the Victorian era in Britain will be the topic for the next subsection, suggesting why a subversion of the adventure story can be a subversion of empire itself.

The Confluence of Travel Writing and Adventure Story – Shared Political Function

In describing her own book on travel writing, Mary Louise Pratt states that "its predominant theme is how travel books written by Europeans about non-European parts of the world created the imperial order for Europeans "at home" and gave them their place in it" (3). At the beginning of the Victorian era, the world must have seen to lay wide open for the taking. New discoveries were constantly made, and explorers both at sea and on land continued to be a source of pride for the public at home. However, since most people never left their home country to experience the new world abroad, travel books fulfilled the function of informing the public of the new territories overseas and the marvels found there.

Pratt claims that not only did the popular accounts create "a sense of curiosity, excitement, adventure and even moral fervour about European expansionism", they were "one of the key instruments that made people "at home" in Europe, feel part of a planetary project, a key instrument, in other words, in creating the "domestic subject" of empire" (3). As history has shown, the imperialist efforts of a country rely on the faith and good will of the people at home, what Pratt calls the "domestic subject". This faith is what sustains the colonial system, and without it, the system cannot continue. The supposition that supports my thesis, that undermining imperial discourse is undermining the empire, is an extrapolation from this insight.

Luckily for the imperial powers, Britain's reading public could not get enough of the accounts of the exciting new discoveries. Tim Youngs seems to agree with Pratt's evaluation of the import of this type of literature. He even postulates a redefinition of heroism occurring in the nineteenth century, ushering in what he dubs "the age of modern heroism" where the growth of empire "led to a new pantheon of explorer-heroes, many of them explorers of Africa", as well as a "resurrection" of their progenitors whose "maritime adventures and mercantile expansion laid the foundations for their nineteenth-century versions" (59).

The worldview projected by Britain's new heroes with few exceptions supported the idea of what came to be known as the 'civilizing mission'. As Andrea White notes, the "interpretive bent of nineteenth century imperial discourse was often made to seem natural and inevitable by an appeal to progress, a phenomenon that most Victorians saw as inevitable and unquestionably good" (18). Both the reading public and the travel writers seemed to subscribe to the myth of the "dark continent", which was seen to justify "or even necessitate" the incursion of European powers into Africa. White calls this an "extremely convenient equation" since – as well as being "morally beneficial" to the African natives – it offered enormous commercial advantages for the British (34). Summing up travel writing's place in

the Victorian society, White finds it was "popular, officially sanctioned and high-minded" (37).

Along with the popularity of the account of real travels on the outskirts of empire, the slumbering genre of the adventure story also seems to have been rehabilitated by the political necessities of the colonial period. Tales of plucky and resourceful individuals overcoming natural and manmade tribulations fitted right in with the image official Britain wanted to project of its explorers and colonial administrators. The degree to which adventure stories resembled the travel writing of the era, is a large factor in explaining the genre's special status. White describes how the adventure story came to be afforded "more credibility than other fictions" (41). These other fictions included novels, around which "general suspicion traditionally hovered" as White elegantly puts it, as well as the *Penny Dreadfuls* I mentioned earlier, which were seen to lead the working classes astray, "serving no useful purpose" (ibid.).

Unlike the fictions, which on this view served no purpose, the adventure story often "purported to be informational" in the same way as factual travel writing. White suggests that, along with the books often coming "equipped with the same appurtenances of fact as travel writing – appended maps, scholarly footnotes and explanatory prefaces", this claim helped avoiding the stigma of being "merely a story" (42.) And, indeed, this seems to have worked, since reviewers in newspapers and journals and school inspectors alike were known to recommend adventure stories as educational, in the same way as travel writing. White even details a case where the reading of adventures stories was suggested as a corrective for youth "seduced" by the "destructive addiction" of fiction (ibid.).

It is a paradox that the same quest structure that informed so much of the less respected romance tradition laid at the foundation of the adventure story which was so high in the genre hierarchy of this time. Interestingly the discursive power and the impetus within the quest structure to view "the central protagonist as heroic and his endeavour as authorized, even divinely ordained" (White 44) made it an excellent tool for telling stories of the civilizing mission, and the moral superiority of the British explorer to the world he explored. Nicholas Daly gives a good summation of the period when he says that "[the adventure story] constituted a more or less explicit part of the propaganda of empire, leading a whole generation of schoolboys – but also, soldiers, sailors, adventurers, and businessmen – to believe that Britain's colonies promised exciting adventures and limitless wealth for those who were bold enough (21).

However, while the elites seem to have been more than happy to sanction adventure stories as a tool for instilling youth with 'the right ideas', the matter was as always a bit more complex. Even in an age that is usually thought of as the height of unapologetic hawkish imperialism, Tim Youngs postulates two types of travel literature: travel books longing for an escape from modernity, and those actually encouraging export of the home society (60).

Similarly, as White convincingly argues a longing for a pre-industrial past was not uncommon in the adventure stories of the nineteenth century. Reading about the possibility of escape from the dreary urban life described in "domestic fiction" (63) served as a sort of wish-fulfilment fantasy that appealed to many readers. Both adventure stories and travel literature sometimes contained ruminations on the simple life of the native societies and rhetorical questions about who led the better life, and who were the happiest. Consider the following quote from Captain Cook's *Journal During His First Voyage Round The World*: "They live in tranquillity which is not disturb'd by the Inequality of Condition: The Earth and sea of their own accord furnishes them with all things necessary for life, they covert not Magnificent Houses, Household-stuff & c."

The wish-fulfilment aspects of the adventure story should not be underestimated. While many of its readers might fail to live up to the heroic ideals presented (Conrad's Jim included), they nonetheless could dream of finding riches in the new world, as one of the recurring plots of the genre attests to. Indeed, the very titles of works such as Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and *King Solomon's Mines*, can be said to "equate exotic territory and fabulous wealth before the narratives themselves do" (Daly 21).The idea of a lost civilization in the interior of Africa that lies at the heart of the plot of *King Solomon's Mines* was by no means a new one. The notion of Africa as a site of hidden treasures and financial gain will appear in the next two chapters. In *King Solomon's Mines*, the treasure hunt is presented as a worthy undertaking. In *Heart of Darkness*, the undermining of it offers a main thematic subversion.

What Happened to the Adventure Story and the Quest Structure?

Although this is not directly relevant to the thesis, it may be valuable, mindful of the concept of genre change as discussed in the introduction, to state without much ado that the adventure story genre did not completely disappear along with the fall of the colonial system. While modernism and more psychologically involved texts tended to dominate the following century's works of 'literary fiction', the adventure story once again found its place on the margins, in the shelves of 'speculative' or so-called 'genre' fiction, along with Westerns,

science fiction and suchlike. Its influence can also be traced in Hollywood blockbusters, as well as much of children's literature.

Additionally, some of the thematic topoi of the adventure story genre, being heirlooms from a much older storytelling tradition, are also able to exist outside of the genre. Said mentions how novelists often termed post-colonial, for example the Kenyan Ngugi and the Sudanese Tayeb Salih, "appropriate for their fiction such great topoi of colonial culture as the quest and the voyage into the unknown, claiming them for their own, post-colonial purposes" (Culture and Imperialism 31). He cites the example of Salih's hero in *Season of Migration to the North*, who "does (and is) the reverse of what Kurtz does (and is): the Black man journeys north into white territory" (ibid.).

Conclusion

In addition to exploring the historical emergence of the adventure story and travel writing and their confluence through the years, this chapter has attempted to illuminate the links between the official British policy governing Imperialism and the adventure story of the period.

I have attempted to support the idea that the continued expansion of empire was contingent on a willing "domestic subject", supporting the Colonial effort abroad. I have shown that travel literature was important for spreading the worldview that considered European intervention in 'uncivilized' areas as mutually beneficial for European and native alike.

As we have seen, the adventure story was afforded a special status during the period, as a result of similarities with the sanctioned travel writing. It was employed as an educational tool, instilling the upcoming generation with the 'right' values, and introducing them to the worldview that informed the colonial effort.

The next chapter will show how the interconnectedness between the adventure genre story and the imperial worldview can be traced within what I consider one of the finer examples of the genre, H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*.

Chapter 2

A Perfected Formula?

H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*

The aim of this chapter is to explore the genre Joseph Conrad subverts in *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim* – the adventure story. The previous chapter detailed the interrelation between the adventure story and the ideology of imperialism. In order to understand exactly what Conrad subverts in his stories however, it seems prudent to start by examining what a traditional adventure story from the nineteenth century looks like.

In my introductory discussion of genre one of the points made was that, while having a "characteristic constellation" in the formal, the rhetorical and thematic dimensions, a genre often is described by foregrounding a particular dimension. For me at least, when I attempt to describe the nineteenth-century adventure story, it is the thematic content that springs to mind. I also mentioned Seitel's concept of "generic worlds", noting that it led me to ponder what would constitute the generic world of the adventure story at the end of the nineteenth century. For me, this world is populated by heroes and villains, English gentlemen with stiff upper lips, savages wild and/or noble, witches and old evils, myths about unknown lands and treasures, supernatural occurrences, maps and legends, romantic interests (unfulfilled, but hinted at), inhospitable landscapes, breathtaking vistas, etc. Additionally, the world of the adventure story is a world of diametrical opposites, with good and evil clearly delineated. Its time is that of episodic dramatic scenes surrounded by long stretches of glossed over repetition (what Bakhtin calls "adventure time"), its narration paternal and competent, and its moral tone best described as conservative.

A reader familiar with H. Rider Haggard's book would no doubt recognize that the generic world I ascribe to the nineteenth century adventure story to a very large degree would overlap with a similar depiction of the world of *King Solomon's Mines*. Quite simply, I think *King Solomon's Mines* is one of the finest proponents of the adventure story genre, and its prototypical status within the genre, to my mind makes it eminently suitable as a straight counterpart to highlight Conrad's twists and subversions of the formula.

According to the popular story, Haggards's book was the result of a wager with his brother that he could not write anything "half as good" as *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson, a book enjoying some measure of success at the time. However, when *King*

Solomon's Mines after numerous rejections, finally was published in 1885, 14 years before *Heart of Darkness*, it became a great popular success, going on to be the bestselling book of the year. It was clear that Rider Haggard had managed to capture the imaginations of the public. His book at the same time both followed and furthered the popular formula of the day, and inspired countless so-called *imperial romances* in the years to follow, many of them written by Haggard himself.

As stated in my introduction, my reading of *King Solomon's Mines* will primarily serve to show typical traits of the contemporary adventure story and the ideological notions they are used to put across, but I will also try to point out ideas of the book that seem subversive in light of the dominant ideology of the time. I will make use of Frow's notion of defining a genre in terms of three dimensions: the formal, the rhetorical and the thematic, in order to show what constitutes the adventure story genre, and why I find *King Solomon's Mines* to be such a good illustration of it. The bulk of this chapter will focus on the thematic dimension. I will, however, also attempt to define the rhetorical dimension, in looking at typical narrative strategies of the narrator as well as the relationship between the narrator and his audience. But first I will briefly discuss the formal dimension of the adventure story, namely its reliance on a formulaic quest structure.

The Quest Structure and "Adventure Time"

The plot of *King Solomon's Mines* follows the prototypical quest structure quite closely. As discussed in the previous chapter, this ancient story configuration found a renewed sense of import and acceptance during the Victorian era, perhaps because it lent itself so well to describe heroic deeds, fitting the image Official Britain wished to put across of its men abroad. The quest structure at its most basic is the story of a hero who sets out in search of someone or something, meets and defeats adversaries along the way, and finally can return home, with riches, or new insights. Quatermain and his compatriots' journey in search of the ancient Mines of King Solomon can also easily be read in this manner, and both Marlow's 'quest' up the river and Jim forever trying to outrun his reputation can be understood as deliberate subversions of the quest structure. This will be discussed at length later.

In the previous chapter I touched upon Bakhtin's idea of "adventure time". While his observations were based on examples from the Greek romance, his insights can also illuminate typical formal features in Haggard's text. In "adventure time" long stretches of rather uneventful events are typically skipped. This is also the case in Quatermain's written account of his journey, where he skips a lot of what happens during the first three months of

their voyage. According to himself, this is done to not make the story to "wearisome" and because their adventures "were of the sort who befell every African hunter" (37). The adventure segments that recount the dramatic events are typically introduced by words such as 'suddenly', 'at just that moment' and similar constructions. It is easy to find examples of this generic feature in *King Solomon's Mines*. *C*onsider the following quotes:

> A week passed**,** and I got the better of my fever. One evening I was sitting on the ground in front of the little tent I had with me[...], when *suddenly* I saw a figure, apparently that of a European[...]. (19, my italics)

> Sir Henry and I were admiring the lovely scene, *when suddenly* we heard an elephant scream, and saw its huge and rushing form [...]. (42, my italics)

In both cases stretches of time are glossed over or described in general terms, before an event happens and starts an adventure segment where the narration becomes more detailed.

Bakhtin's notion of the "adventuristic person" also fits well both with how Quatermain ends up on his adventure and with what befalls the party once underway. The other important persons of the story all come to Quatermain; he does not seek them out. This is true both for Sir Henry Curtis and Captain Good, and later the king-to-be Umbopa. Even before that, though, it is chance encounters that lead Quatermain to meet both the descendant of the Portuguese explorer and Sir Curtis' brother, two encounters that in large part determine what is to happen later. Both in the books orthodox use of the quest structure, and in its use of "adventure-time", I find *King Solomon's Mines* to conform to the typical of the adventure story genre.

The Characters: the English

In discussing the thematic dimension of *King Solomon's Mines*, I am especially interested in exploring in which ways Haggard's book projects ideological notions representative of imperial discourse, since this is what I claim Conrad's works undermines. In order to do this, I will primarily focus on how the characters, heroes and villains, English and Native, are portrayed and to what degree their depiction exhibits racial stereotyping. I will also describe the notions of 'Englishness' presented in the book, discussing how they relate to notions of imperialism.

While in the previous section I claimed that the plot of *King Solomon's Mines* followed well-trod paths in its perfect embodiment of the quest structure, I think the

characters of *King Solomon's Mines* are also quite typical of the genre the adventure story had become by the end of the nineteenth century. Andrea White argues that the depiction of the hero of the adventure story was "fairly consistent and similar to those portrayals in the writing of Cook, McClintock, Brooke, Speke and Livingstone. He was Christian, usually of a privileged, if not aristocratic class and manly, that is gentlemanly, brave, honest, decisive, hearty and just" (65). The heroes of *King Solomon's Mines* all exemplify different aspects of this ideal. Allan Quatermain, who in his own words was "born a gentleman, though I have been nothing but a poor travelling trader and hunter all my life" (10), embodies that very typical adventure hero characteristic: practical know-how. His years of African experience make him eminently suitable as a travel companion, just as his class background makes him trustworthy as an English gentleman. His lack of formal schooling is of little consequence. As I will discuss later, it even lends more credibility to him as a narrator.

The other protagonists of the story also embody different Victorian ideals. Sir Henry is drawn as the decisive aristocrat, who cares more for his family than for money. Unlike some men of privilege, he is far from a 'milksop' and not afraid to fight. In fact, he seems to enjoy combat immensely, and his martial prowess makes a great impression on the warlike society of Kukuanaland. Captain Good, though sometimes used to humorous effect in the book, is the seemingly perfect personification of a respectable Englishman. Though not born an aristocrat, he has made much of himself, not least due to his perfect loyalty. As a sailor, he is naturally prone, at least according to Quatermain, to fall in love with every girl he meets, but he is shown to be loyal to Foulata even after her death, and even though their relationship would have been impossible. Captain Good is in many ways also the representative of the 'modern' world. His mode of dress, stylish, though somewhat unfit for an expedition, is one of the things that first grants the party entry into Kukuanaland, and it is by his almanac the party is able to predict the lunar eclipse that help them overthrow the tyrant they find there. He is also a doctor, "not of course qualified, but he knew more about it than many a man who could write a M.D. after his name" (31). While medical science of course is one of civilizations greatest accomplishments, the value of practical know-how is again more important than formal schooling.

True to the typical characterizations of the adventure story, these heroes do not change in any significant way during the course of the story. Andrea White notes how strange it is that both in travel writing and the adventure story the hero "affects and even changes those he encounters" (23), but himself remains completely unchanged by his experiences. White states that the hero typically "seems hardly to have left England, but taken its amenities, attitudes,

and moral orders along with him" (ibid.). In this regard the English heroes of *King Solomon's Mines* are very typical indeed. Bakhtin's eloquent description of the hero of the Greek romance seems to provide an equally fitting illustration of his English successor: "The hammer of events shatters nothing and forges nothing, it merely tries the durability of an already finished product. And the product passes the test" (107). According to White, it was first with Conrad's modernist take on the genre that the "effects of the travels on the traveller [was] recounted in the writing (23). The destabilization of this typical depiction of the hero counts among the key subversions in Conrad's work. In *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*, the protagonists are no longer inoculated towards the changes in outlook brought on by the colonial experience.

The Characters: the Natives

Just like the descriptions of the English heroes, the descriptions of the native in *King Solomon's Mines* also appear rather formulaic and typical of the writing of the period. Quatermain wishes to be seen as a man without prejudices, scratching out the word "nigger" from his introduction because he does not like it, and tells his son that "I've known natives who *are [gentlemen]*, [...] and I have known mean whites with lots of money and fresh out from home, too, who *are not*" (10). The fact remains, however, that much of the indifferent and systemic racism typical of the genre, and of the Victorian era itself, remains both in Quatermain's descriptions and in his conception of the world described. Describing one of the native guides he hires, Quatermain notes: "he had one failing, so common with his race, drink" (32). This tendency to ascribe failings to race rather than the individual is typical, and something that Mary Lousie Pratt discusses as prevalent among travel writers of the day. Typically, this is achieved by the homogenization and abstraction of the singular person into a "collective they", or even further into an "iconic he", which is then used as the "subject of verbs in timeless present tense" (62). This is the sort of language used to describe animals in an encyclopaedic article. The result is that anything "he" or "they" does is, not a particular event in time, but rather just an enactment (Pratt uses the word "instance") of a "pre-given custom or trait" (ibid.). That Ventvögel, the native guide, is given to strong drink is in this way not a personal shortcoming or weakness, but rather a racial one.

The description of Umbopa as a positive exception from the undifferentiated native horde is also an example of a common trope in adventure stories and travel literature. From the first meeting on, Umbopa is seen as nobler than other members of his race, and displays many of the qualities of the aristocratic Englishman, mirroring Curtis in his search for family

and in his dismissal of monetary gain. “He was somehow different from the ordinary run of Zulus, and I mistrusted his offer to come without pay” (34). It comes as no great surprise, when Umbopa in fact proves to be a long-lost heir to the throne of a proud kingdom, changing his name to Ignosi. Umbopa is described in a way that recalls the typical descriptions offered by amongst others Robert Mitchell Ballantyne – the author of more than hundred adventure stories for the young, most famously *The Coral Island* (1858) – in novels whose goal was the abolishment of slavery. As White puts it, the abolitionist cause called for “some readjustment of the sterotype” (72). Rather than describing “they” as completely different from us, the likenesses are brought up, and the remaining differences are “idealized”. I will reproduce the quote White uses from Ballantyne’s *Black Ivory, A Tale of Adventure among the slavers of East Africa* (1873) below:

> if an enthusiastic member of the Royal Academy was in search of a model which should combine the strength of Hercules with the grace of Apollo, he could not find a better than the man before us, for you will observe, the more objectionable points about our ideal of the negro are not very prominent in him. His lips are not thicker than the lips of many a roast-beef loving John Bull. His nose is not flat and his heels do not protrude uneccesarily[…]. (Ballantyne qtd. by White 73)

Quatermain’s portrayal of Umbopa is in many ways similar to Ballantyne’s, but additionally the likenesses between the aristocratic and martial Sir Henry and the warrior-king-in-exile Umbopa are foregrounded, suggesting that they share the traits that make a man great.

> He certainly was a magnificent-looking man; I never saw a finer native. Standing about six foot three high, he was broad in proportion, and very shapely. In that light, too, his skin looked scarcely more than dark, except where here and there where deep black scars marked old assegai wounds. Sir Henry walked up to him and looked into his proud, handsome face. “They make a good pair don’t they?” said Good, “One as big as the other”. “I like your looks, Mr. Umbopa, and I will take you as my servant,” said sir Henry in English. Umbopa evidently understood him, for he answered in Zulu, "It is well"; and then added, with a glance at the white man's great stature and breadth, "We are men, thou and I.” (35)

The description of Foulata, Good’s romantic interest that never may be, shows similar value-laden description. The things that are positive about her are things that seem to display some sort of similarity to feminine English traits, and which set her apart from the other natives. Quatermain describes her appearance as graceful and beautiful, but a detailed description of her face, for example, is never given. The physical differences are played down. Her dancing is described in the following way: “A beautiful young woman sprang out

of the ranks and began to pirouette in front of us with a grace and vigour which would have put most ballet girls to shame" (112). Similarly, when Good is ill, Foulata tends him and "perform[s] all the merciful errands of a sick-room swiftly, gently, and with as fine an instinct as that of a trained hospital nurse" (153). These descriptions put across a quite complicated world-view. On the one hand, they express praise that seems in line with the genre-typical valuation of practical know-how over 'civilized' schooling; on the other hand, the construction of the sentences seems to imply that English civilization should provide the standard that actions are described in relation and comparison to, and that everything should live up to or surpass this standard to be qualified as 'good'.

The descriptions of the antagonists also rely on racial stereotypes. Twala, the tyrant, is described as a monster, and during his descriptive introduction he is even denied the personal pronoun of a man, instead being referred to as "it".

> Then the gigantic figure slipped off the karross and stood up before us, a truly alarming spectacle. It was that of an enormous man, with the most entirely repulsive countenance we had ever beheld. The lips were thick as a negro's, the nose was flat, it had but one gleaming black eye (for the other was represented by a hollow in the face), and its whole expression was cruel and sensual to a degree. (88)

Similarly, the "evil witch", Gagool, is robbed of humanity and referred to as monkey-like on many occasions, first being introduced as "What appeared to be a withered-up monkey, wrapped in a fur cloak" (88). Needless to say, natives being described in ways that bring their supposed more primitive and animal qualities to the front were already a common though offensive trope of the genre.

Worthy Exports? Notions of Englishness

King Solomon's Mines is also traditional and ideologically representative of its genre in its presentation of how English traits may be exported and serve to the betterment of the native society. Upon presenting the tyrant with the gift of a gun, Quatermain cannot let the opportunity to instruct the natives in Christian moral escape him. "We [The English, or people of the stars, as they maintain] shed no blood of man, except in just punishment" (93). He appeals to the natives' own superstitions to try to enforce his will, cursing those who do harm with the gun. "Only this charm I lay upon it, thou shalt kill no man with it. If thou liftest it against a man, it shalt kill thee" (ibid.). The archaic language, with its "thou shalt's" makes sure the idea of the Ten Commandments is never far away. Thus, it is easy to read the scene

as English missionaries teaching wild natives the right way, bringing the glory of the Light with them into darkest Africa. Of course, the Englishmen themselves seem to have no problem killing men with their rifles in the subsequent civil war. Nonetheless, when all is over and Umbopa has become Ignosi, the rightful king, Quatermain and company make him promise to rule as they would, and strive "to respect the law, and to put none to death without a cause. So shalt thou prosper" (189). Thus Quatermain and friends can return home, secure in the knowledge of having made things right, untouched by the wilderness and just as certain in their convictions as when they set out.

That the wilderness holds no temptation, though, is not strictly true for the heroes of *King Solomon's Mines* – at least not for the entire party – as can be seen in the case of the never fulfilled romance between captain Good and the native girl Foulata. Quatermain, who claims he is looking at it "from the point of view of an oldish man of the world" (186), is opposed to the liaison from the beginning. This can be gathered from Quatermain's thoughts in the final line of this quote where Foulata picks up her courage to follow captain Good into the mines:

> "Nay, my lord, whither thou goest there I go also."
> "The deuce you will!" thought I to myself; "that may be rather awkward if we ever get out of this." (162-163)

As might be expected, the English heroes, in accordance with the formula of adventure stories, of course get out of it. Foulata, however, does not, and Quatermain is secretly (and rather coldly) relieved at the young girl's sacrificial death trying to protect the English from Gagool. He considers her "removal" as he puts it

> a fortunate occurrence, since, otherwise, complications would have been sure to ensue. The poor creature was no ordinary native girl, but a person of great, I had almost said stately, beauty, and of considerable refinement of mind. But no amount of beauty or refinement could have made an entanglement between Good and herself a desirable occurrence; for, as she herself put it, "Can the sun mate with the darkness, or the white with the black?" (186)

The line he quotes is supplied by Foulata herself in her dying speech. Tellingly, even the natives of a long-lost country in the African interior seem to have internalized the dominant thought at the time in England: that interracial romantic involvement is problematic.

Just as is the case with Foulata and Good's unfulfilled romance, Quatermain and company's final farewell to Kukuanaland present the notions that the English belong among their peers and should not consort with natives. While Ignosi is first angered at Quatermain's

insistence that they wish to "seek their own place" (190), he is soon becalmed and accepts what is suggested to be the natural order of things. Just like Foulata did in her death scene, Ignosi seems to subscribe to the imperialist notion of racial separation. He sums it up himself by saying: "That which flies in the air loves not to run along the ground; the white man loves not to live on the level of the black or to house among his kraals" (ibid.). Ignosi then puts in place an isolationist policy Quatermain seems to agree with, where no other white men are allowed to enter Kukuanaland.

On the one hand, this seems completely in line with the thinking of the Victorian era. Yet Quatermain's approval of Ignosi's isolationist policy also appears to question the wisdom of exporting modern 'civilization' to already, in Haggard and Quatermain's eyes, well-functioning 'barbarian societies'. This is an undermining of the imperial project, which after all relied on the thought that the Europeans were on a civilizing mission, helping the less fortunate better themselves. Seen against this background, having England's best and brightest swearing to protect the noble 'barbarians' from what is seen as the corrupting forces of civilization is indeed turning the table upside down.

But while this is an untypical, if not unheard of notion, does it destabilize the ideology of imperialism? Unlike Conrad, Haggard seems to have been a sworn imperialist. However, at the same he was unhappy about the way politics in England were headed. As discussed in chapter one, a longing for a pre-industrial past was not uncommon at the time, and there are certainly traces of this across Haggard's work. In his case he seems to admire the feudal societies of interior Africa, and their social organizations. The protagonists of Haggard's fiction appear to share the same view as him, because in a sequel to *King Solomon's Mines* called simply *Allan Quatermain* (1887) his heroes long to go back to Africa. They want to get out of an English society that they feel have become corrupted and governed by the wrong sort of people. While finding home-life in England unsatisfying in some ways can be seen to subvert the quest structure, and its insistence on a successful return home, I think in this case it attests more to Haggard's misgivings with the politicians of his day than a subversion of imperialist notions. After all, the worth of English gentlemen is never undermined. Indeed, as Linda Dryden notes, even when the protagonists "remain in Africa in Allan Quatermain […] they ascend to the highest status in the land to live in the palaces of Zu-Vendis, the "lost" white kingdom they set out to discover" (3).

Travel Writing as a Model for the Narrative Style and Setup in *King Solomon's Mines*

In this next section of the chapter I wish to turn to the rhetorical dimension of genre. I will explore what comprises the typical narrative features of the adventure story, discussing how these are represented in Haggard's work. I will start by suggesting some features borrowed from the genre's close relative travel writing, before I attempt to explore the peculiar relationship between the narrator and the reader in the traditional adventure story.

Contemporary travel literature appears to have exerted a considerable influence on the style of narration in *King Solomon's Mines*. While, as I have shown, the structure of the story in *King Solomon's Mines* seems to correspond to the classical quest, the narrative style is informed by travel literature and the journals of explorers like Captain James Cook or Dr. Livingstone. In the first chapter I detailed how the similarities to the genre of travel writing afforded the adventure story a special status at the time, and in the following I will show in what way these similarities are conveyed in the texts.

To start, the use of a first-person partaking narrator is the most used narrative viewpoint of travel literature. Simply by choosing to tell the story in this way, Haggard makes a claim for the authority afforded travel literature. Allan Quatermain is not only one of the protagonists of the story, his are the eyes through which we see, and his mind is the organizing device of the story. It is made very clear that the reader is privy to a deliberate retelling of the events Quatermain experienced, written down some time after the fact. This is typical and essential for travel literature, where the "actual experience of a journey is reconstructed [...] in the moment of being told" (Youngs 5). In *King Solomon's Mines* as in its travel literature predecessors, there is an insistence on the reality of the written document as a memoir of a real person. This is something that Quatermain maintains from the very beginning. "It is a curious thing that at my age—fifty-five last birthday — I should find myself taking up a pen to try to write a 'history'" (Haggard: 9). Here, the use of the word "history", rather than story, further strengthens the impression that what we are about to read really has happened.

Before Quatermain begins relaying the main story, though, the reader is supplied with an introduction where Quatermain, in character, apologizes for "shortcomings both in style and contents". He explains that he would have liked to "dwell upon at length" more aspects of Kukuanaland, such as its flora and fauna, its customs and its military organization, and that he did not do so is because he and his compatriots decided it would be best to tell the story in a "plain and straightforward manner" (7). Quatermain also apologizes for his blunt way of writing, commenting that he is "more accustomed to handle a rifle than a pen, and cannot

make any pretence to the grand literary flights and flourishes which I see in novels" (8). This again suggest the pains Haggard goes to in order to set up the story as a memoir of real events, in strong contrast to the flights of fancy found in novels.

The apology for lack of literary merit came to be quite common in travel literature, where, after all, the point of writing was to supply information rather than ornamentation. Captain James Cook's introductory apology from 1777 is worth considering. Cook's book not only proved that the audience for unadorned travel literature was there, setting off a boom of similar expeditionary tales, but also provided a formula for later travel literature to follow. The journal from Cook's first expedition was to the captain's chagrin heavily edited (by professional writer and editor John Hawkesworth) to make it more literary in style. For the published account of his second expedition, however, no such doctoring took place, and what the reader gets is Cook's unadorned journal. In his introduction he says:

> I shall therefore conclude this introductory discourse with desiring the reader to excuse the inaccuracies of style, which doubtless he will frequently meet with in the following narrative; and that, when such occur, he will recollect that it is the production of a man, who has not had the advantage of much school education, but who has been constantly at sea from his youth; [...] the public must not expect from me the elegance of a fine writer, or the plausibility of a professed book-maker; but will, I hope, consider me as a plain man, zealously exerting himself in the service of his country, and determined to give the best account he is able of his proceedings. (*Voyage Towards the South Pole and Round the World*)

About a century later David Livingstone prefaced his *A Popular Account of Dr. Livingstone's Expedition to the Zambesi and Its Tributaries* with an apology in the same mould:

> The eight years spent in Africa, since my last work was published, have not, I fear, improved my power of writing English; but I hope that, whatever my descriptions want in clearness, or literary skill, may in a measure be compensated by the novelty of the scenes described, and the additional information afforded on that curse of Africa, and that shame, even now, in the 19th century, of an European nation,—the slave-trade. (Livingstone)

To me, it seems that the lack of what their contemporary world would consider "elegance" may even have become a point of pride for some of these writers. Rather than detract from the stories told, their rough-hewn manner helps them firmly distance themselves from the 'soft' literary writers of the day and confirm their status as men of action rather than words. By invoking the company of such real world explorers, the new heroes of the day as discussed in the first chapter, Haggard no doubt wishes some of their credibility to rub off on his narrator.

Quatermain's insistence that he is a simple man reappears numerous times throughout the book, serving as an additional way in which the audience is led to trust his account of events. In fact, after his introductory apology, Quatermain starts the first chapter by making a list of the four reasons he has for writing his story: that his fellow explorers asked him to do so, that he has the time since he is recuperating from a lion's bite, that he wants his son to have something to amuse him, and, finally, that it is the strangest story he knows of. Suffice to say, not very many literary stories I know of start with a list of the author's reasons for writing them down. To a practical man like Quatermain, however, writing stories may not be seen as a very productive or worthy pursuit, so perhaps his listing serves as a way to persuade himself of the value of what he is doing. The inclusion of the list gives the start of the story a strange, almost defensive or apologetic quality, as well as contributing to the image Haggard wishes to portray of Quatermain.

Speaking of lists, another narrative feature of travel literature that Haggard borrows for his story is the inclusion of detailed lists of provisions, equipment and weaponry. Consider the following list copied from Quatermain's "pocket-book, where [he] made the entry at the time":

> 'Three heavy breech-loading double-eight elephant guns, weighing about fifteen pounds each, to carry a charge of eleven drachms of black powder' […]
>
> 'One double No. 12 central-fire Keeper's shot-gun, full choke both barrels.' This gun proved of the greatest service to us afterwards in shooting game for the pot.
>
> 'Three Winchester repeating rifles (not carbines), spare guns.
>
> 'Three single-action Colt's revolvers, with the heavier, or American pattern of cartridge.'" (32)

Quatermain's list of firearms is not very far removed from something like the following list, which appeared in the previously mentioned Captain James Cook's journal, detailing the provisions brought along:

> Salted cabbage is cabbage cut to pieces, and salted down in casks, which will preserve it a long time.
>
> Portable broth is so well known, that it needs no description. We were supplied with it both for the sick and well, and it was exceedingly beneficial.
>
> Saloup and rob of lemons and oranges were for the sick and scorbutic only, and wholly under the surgeon's care. (*A Voyage Towards the South Pole and Around the World*)

The inclusion of something unliterary like a list should of course also be seen as a strategy to further the authenticity of the story. The remark, seemingly made in passing, mentioning the list being copied from a "pocket book" also reminds the reader that this story is supposed to be the account of an expedition the narrator has really undertaken.

The adventure story genre *King Solomon's Mines* represents, also made use of one of the defining organizing features of travel literature, namely an 'implied nativity'. I think this is the very feature that makes the nineteenth century adventure story special, and different from the adventure stories of the past. While in the first chapter I mentioned how its progenitor, the ancient Greek romance, is abstract and filled with "isolated curiosities and rarities that bear no connection to each other" (Bakhtin 102), the adventure story of the Victorian era attempts to give a fuller picture of the world its heroes experience. In this way, the modern adventure story makes use of the features Bakhtin finds typical of the "ancient travel novel", where the author's own homeland serves as the "organizing centre for the point of view, the scales of comparison, the approaches and evaluations determining how alien countries are seen and understood" (103). Like the typical viewpoint of the travel literature genre, Quatermain's narrative point of view in *King Solomon's Mines* describes people, scenery and events in a way which makes them stand out against what he and his readers are accustomed to from their homelands. Though Quatermain has lived most of his life in Africa and seems well suited to master the challenges the party meets on their way, his mind and sense of self is still very much English. Exactly this Englishness forms the nexus of his narrative. This is important since the readership of the story, both implied (represented by Quatermain's son back home in England) and real (in the thousands of people who enjoyed Haggard's book) would share the same sense of Englishness. This leads me to the next section where I wish to discuss the relationship between the Quatermain and his readers.

Positioning and Function of the Reader: "One of Us"

The positioning and function of the reader in the typical adventure story is another important topic to consider, since this becomes so central to the way in which Conrad's work succeeds in its subversion.

If we keep in mind the widespread idea, discussed in the first chapter, of the adventure story as tool for raising eager young men to become propagators for further imperial expansion, Haggard's dedication of "this faithful, but unpretending record of remarkable adventure" to "all the big and little boys who read it" (3) makes sense. The narrator of the typical nineteenth-century adventure story often took on a paternal tone that introduced and

instructed a supposedly more naïve audience to the ways of the world. The typical reader of an adventure story at the time was a young man or adolescent boy curious for adventure. Fortunately for the powers that wanted to spread the imperial worldview, this thirst for adventure often was more often than not coupled with a malleable mind and the typical high spirits of youth. The indestructible idealism and good cheer with which the heroes of these stories rose to their challenges was meant to inspire young men in their own identity-creation, something which it assuredly did. Conrad's Jim can be seen as a literary manifestation of the typical reader of the adventure story and this will be discussed in chapter four.

Much like his travel literature predecessors, Quatermain is wont to directly refer to his "reader". I think his addressing the reader can serve different functions. On some occasions he refers to the reader as a peer. An example of this is when he states that the reader "[...] doubtless […] will observe that the weapons of each class were of the same make and calibre, so that the cartridges were interchangeable" (32). If we accept the notion that the narrator of the typical adventure story is attempting to teach his reader about the world and in a sense "groom" him for the imperialist project, this levelling with the reader can be seen as a positive reinforcement of the reader's supposed interest in weapons. It can of course also suggest that if the reader did not notice the interchangeable calibre of the guns, he should endeavour to learn more about them. On another occasion Quatermain actually asks the reader to look at the facsimile of the map included in the text: "If the reader will refer to the rough copy and translation of old da Silvestra's map" (54). Here, this sort of appeal serves to make the fanciful tale seem more grounded in fact; the reader can himself refer to a map to see the course the party followed. The map was a central part of travel literature, and its inclusion here attests to another inheritance from that genre.

However, in most of the cases where the reader is invoked it is in order for the reader's imagination to provide detail where the words of a humble elephant-hunter fail to contain the experiences they go through and the sights they see. "What such a temperature meant to us, enervated as we were by hardship, want of food, and the great heat of the desert, the reader may imagine better than I can describe" (63). On the other hand, Quatermain is not above telling his readers that his experiences outstrip their understanding. "Reader, you may have lain awake at night and thought the quiet oppressive, but I say with confidence that you can have no idea what a vivid, tangible thing is perfect stillness" (178). Consider also the following passage, where the reader's experience should only serve as a starting point for imagining fantastic sights, as a way to get "some idea of the size":

> Let the reader picture to himself the hall of the vastest cathedral he ever stood in, windowless indeed, but dimly lighted from above, presumably by shafts connected with the outer air and driven in the roof, which arched away a hundred feet above our heads, and he will get some idea of the size of the enormous cave in which we found ourselves". (163)

Quatermain also sometimes tries to anticipate the probable reaction of his readers. This is exemplified by the passage where he pre-empts the reader's question in explaining why they did not bring more diamonds with them upon leaving the chamber Gagool trapped them in:

> And curious as it may seem to you, my reader, sitting at home at ease and reflecting on the vast, indeed the immeasurable, wealth which we were thus abandoning, I can assure you that if you had passed some twenty-eight hours with next to nothing to eat and drink in that place, you would not have cared to cumber yourself with diamonds whilst plunging down into the unknown bowels of the earth, in the wild hope of escape from an agonising death". (182)

To summarize, the relationship between the writer and the reader of adventure stories is much like that between a boy and his worldlier uncle, or between a student and a mentor. In this regard, Quatermain's narrative voice joins the multitude of adventure story narrators occupying the same position towards their readers. He represents the knowing insider who measures out his insights to the younger generation. His direct invocations of his readers appear to manifest a range of strategies to this end, variously encouraging, admonishing or gently chiding a reader who is in the process of becoming "one of us", a gentleman-in-the-making and an heir to the world's greatest empire.

The relationship between reader and writer in *King Solomon's Mines*, however, is also one of the areas of the book that some have found to be subversive. Andrea White sees the book as a precursor to Conrad's fiction, considering it as one of the first books that showed that the genre of the adventure story could be put to other uses than those officially sanctioned. According to White, Haggard confronts and challenges his readership in a way not done before in adventure fiction by describing war in prose many of the reviewers of the day found "unnecessary graphic" (82) I tend to agree with this view. Though Haggard's descriptions of violence would seem quaint in comparison to much of today's literary production, there is no doubt that the bloodshed of the Kukuana civil war was written by a man who revelled in the glory of combat. Haggard, like Quatermain, seems to be fascinated by the feudal societies of interior Africa and their military organization, exemplified by Kukuanaland where every able-bodied man is a soldier in addition to his other occupation. Thus, while far from the subversion of imperialism found in Conrad's works, the militaristic

bent of Haggard's writing suggests that the adventure story can support other ideologies than those of official Britain.

Complicating Features: Nested Stories and Footnotes

While White as we just saw credits Haggard with confronting the reader in what may constitute a subversive way, I think *King Solomon's Mines* also contains further complicating narrative features that deserve mention. Though they are still quite far removed from what Conrad did in the works I will discuss in the next two chapters, these features seem rather sophisticated for their time, and in comparison to *King Solomon's Mines'* peers and predecessors in the genre.

As discussed, the first-person narrator was a mainstay both of the adventure story and the travel account. However, in *King Solomon's Mines* the relationship between the reader, the implied author and the author is not as simple as that. Though the story is told as a first-person narrative, there are examples of nested stories within Quatermain's overarching narration. At the outset of the book, Sir Henry tells the story of why he has come to search for his brother, relayed to the reader through Quatermain's seemingly word-perfect memory. Captain Good also has his own story to tell of why he chooses to join Sir Henry, though it is much shorter. "[…] Nothing else to do, you see. Turned out by my Lords of the Admiralty to starve on half pay" (16). Quatermain himself recounts to Sir Henry and Good the time he first heard of the legend of *King Solomon's Mines*, as well as various meetings with the descendant of the Portuguese explorer who draw the map and with Sir Henry's own brother. All these sub-stories are set up as oral storytelling situations recounted in writing, but with the difference from *Heart of Darkness* that the storyteller is also the person writing it down at a later date. As Ignosi is revealed to be the rightful heir to the throne, his story is pierced together from his own memories and those of his uncle Infadoos. No one of them has the full picture, but upon hearing his uncle give an account of the happenings that led to himself and his mother fleeing the land, Ignosi is able to join what he has heard from his mother and his own experiences as a grown man to the tale, thereby making his life story whole and coherent. In some ways this can be seen as a forerunner to the puzzle-solving Marlow does trying to piece together the story that will explain Jim's fate in Conrad's *Lord Jim*.

Another feature seems to stray from the norm of the traditional adventure story is the singular way footnotes are used in the story. To me, it appears these footnotes serve a dual function, written as they are in two different voices. First and foremost, their inclusion works

to further impress the written-down nature of the story upon the reader, as when Quatermain among other things uses them to explain various aspects of the Kukuana people,

> [1] It is a law amongst the Kukuanas that no man of the direct royal blood can be put to death, unless by his own consent, which is, however, never refused. He is allowed to choose a succession of antagonists, to be approved by the king, with whom he fights, till one of them kills him.—A.Q. (145)

but also some of his other anthropological observations from his many years in Africa:

> [1] This cruel custom is not confined to the Kukuanas, but is by no means uncommon amongst African tribes on the occasion of the outbreak of war or any other important public event.—A.Q. (122)

The use of these "in-story" footnotes contributes to the feeling of reading a well-considered memoir, but again also tells us something about the character of our narrator. Though he refers to himself as a humble elephant-hunter (although one of some renown), the inclusion of the footnotes reveals that he also considers himself something of a scientist, with interests in the field of anthropology as well as flora and fauna. This is another inheritance from the travel literature of the day, where such informative asides were common, and the travellers were often jacks of many trades.

Along with Quatermain's footnotes, there is also what a thin narrative layer on top of Allan Quatermain's story. This constitutes of another authorial presence in the text, called "Editor", ostensibly distinct from Quatermain, who casts his own observations in footnotes. This "Editor" seems to exist inside the world of the story told, since he appears to know Quatermain on a personal level. His footnotes sometimes further the readers understanding of the world, as in the following: "[1] Suliman is the Arabic form of Solomon.—Editor" (18), but often they pertain directly to Quatermain's comments. Sometimes they even negate what Quatermain has just said, in gently mocking terms. An illustrative example is Quatermain's introduction of Henry Curtis as

> a gentleman of about thirty, [who] was perhaps the biggest-chested and longest-armed man I ever saw. He had yellow hair, a thick yellow beard, clear-cut features, and large grey eyes set deep in his head. I never saw a finer-looking man, and somehow he reminded me of an ancient Dane. (11)

Quatermain's description is followed by a footnote by the "Editor", who questions his ideas, calling them "rather confused".

> [1] Mr. Quatermain's ideas about ancient Danes seem to be rather confused; we have always understood that they were dark-haired people. Probably he was thinking of Saxons.—Editor. (ibid.)

The Editor also comments on Quatermain's reliability when it comes to literary allusions. On one occasion Quatermain refers to the amount of flies with a Hamlet quotation wrongly attributed to the Bible. "There they came, "not as single spies, but in battalions," as I think the Old Testament[1] says somewhere" (52). This is followed by a tongue-in-cheek footnote which mocks both Quatermain and the readers of the book who "accepts his references as accurate":

> [1] Readers must beware of accepting Mr. Quatermain's references as accurate, as, it has been found, some are prone to do. Although his reading evidently was limited, the impression produced by it upon his mind was mixed. Thus to him the Old Testament and Shakespeare were interchangeable authorities.—Editor. (ibid.)

Actually, Quatermain's constant misattribution of literary quotes is something of a running gag through the book. According to the explanatory notes in the Oxfords World Classics edition of the book, Haggard described Quatermain's habit of attributing everything to the only two works of literature he knew, *The Ingoldsby Legends* and *The Old Testament,* as a literary joke (Haggard 210). Quatermain mixing up his books of course also adds to the image of Quatermain as a man of action, rather than words. This sets him further apart from the narrator of *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow, who, though also in some ways a man of action, usually gets his literary allusions right.

Conclusion

My purpose in this chapter has been two-fold. By describing *King Solomon's Mines* using the three dimensions from Frow's model of genre – the formal, the thematic and the rhetorical – I have attempted to expose the constituent parts of a typical nineteenth century adventure story. By drawing attention to the different elements that cumulatively make up the genre, I hope to facilitate the comparison with the myriad subversions or destabilizations of these features found in the texts the next chapters will examine.

In my examination of the formal dimension of *King Solomon's Mines* I have found that the plot closely adheres to the typical quest structure: it follows three heroic protagonists on a journey into the unknown, where they meet and defeat adversaries along the way, and after completing their mission return home, none the worse for wear. I have shown how the

use of "adventure time" is used in a way typical of the genre to structure the narrative around the most action-filled episodes.

Exploring the thematic dimension of the book I have focused on how the characters and the plot of *King Solomon's Mines* seem to bring across many of the commonly accepted notions of what it meant to be an Englishman in Africa. I have claimed that the book shows the English as blameless in their conduct, and that the reader is left with the impression that the party leaves the country in better shape than it was when they 'discovered' it.

I have argued that the rhetorical dimension of *King Solomon's Mines* is informed by the narrator's wish to emulate the narration of travel literature, making a bid for the authority afforded that genre's narrators. Quatermain's narration can thus be considered to inhabit the typical voice shared by many such adventure story narrators, with its insistence on presenting factual information in an honest but not necessarily sophisticated way. I have detailed how the relationship between Quatermain and his readers can be seen to be typical of the genre and the instructive role afforded it during the era.

I have shown that there are small subversions present, thematic and narrative that point towards Conrad's use of the genre. I have stated how Haggard's political subversions show that the adventure story genre can be used for other purposes than the officially sanctioned. I have also elaborated how subversions of the narrative situation seem mainly to provide small in-jokes in a genre which previously had tended to take itself very seriously. The other complicating features, namely the nesting of stories and creation of oral storytelling situations inside the main story, do not seem to particularly destabilize the narrative in any way. However, by foregrounding the act of storytelling they may point towards Conrad's experiments with, and remarkable mastery of, this type of setup in *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim.*

Chapter 3

Subverted Expectations

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

Joseph Conrad, like many of his contemporaries, wrote for money to survive. He was notoriously broke for large parts of his life, and his ill health prevented him from continuing his life at sea. For this reason it must have made sense for him to write something that, at least to some degree, could find favour with the reading public and the editors of the magazines and periodicals that published his stories and provided him with his income. As tales of the exotic reaches of the British Empire, and the expeditions exploring the outskirts of the known world were very much in vogue, it seems little wonder that much of Conrad's literary production uses the same backdrop as other popular novels of the time. Conrad of course could also draw on personal experience from his days as a mariner in the remote areas of the colonial world. By most accounts, Conrad appears to have been very fond of the adventure story genre, crediting the journals of the great naval explorers of the past century with his decision to become a sailor in the first place. However, by the time of writing *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*, Conrad appears to have lost his fate both in the imperial project and heroism itself. As Andrea White suggests, Conrad's stated wish to transgress the adventure story genre came from "a personal awareness that the dream was over" (108). While it seems Conrad did believe that heroic deeds were indeed possible, he also felt that the time of heroes was gone. This sentiment lends many of his stories a somewhat elegiac or nostalgic air.

Like many novels at the time, *Heart of Darkness* was first published serially, and the first instalment of *Heart of Darkness* was ironically published in the millennial issue of *Blackwood's Magazine*, a politically conservative and pro-imperialist magazine, in an issue otherwise very much celebratory of the great expansion the British Empire had seen during the last century. At the time of publication, *Heart of Darkness* was received as yet another adventure story in the mould of similar tales concerned with the exploration of Africa, though something of an outrigger in stylistic terms. Its later inclusion in the canon of early modernist texts, exemplifies the notions discussed in the introduction of how our concept of genre can change over time, suggesting that the same text can be seen to belong to more than one genre. Though still ostensibly an adventure story, the notions that drive its contemporaneous brethren are to a large degree inverted or undermined in *Heart of Darkness*. Rather than just

being another story about exploration, Marlow's account of his travel up the Congo River becomes something more complex; the familiar framework draws the reader in, but Conrad keeps confounding expectations as the story proceeds.

In this third chapter, focusing on *Heart of Darkness,* I will endeavour to demonstrate how Joseph Conrad in his novella deftly uses the tradition of the adventure story while simultaneously undermining it. To do this I will again employ the same model of genre as I used in the previous chapter, and in turn show how *Heart of Darkness* undermines the adventure story's particular configuration of formal, thematic and rhetorical features as expressed in *King Solomon's Mines*. In order to contrast and compare the two texts, this chapter will follow the same structure as the previous, and consider the three dimensions of genre one by one. I will start by exploring how the quest that Marlow undertakes differs from the traditional adventure story. In my discussion of the thematic dimensions of the text, I will try to show how the world and the protagonists presented in *Heart of Darkness* greatly differ from those of Haggard's more traditional *King Solomon's Mines*. I will look at the very different notions of Englishness found in the two texts and draw particular notice to the way Conrad describes the 'civilizing mission' going on in the Congo, and the subversion of the European self-image of bringing order to chaos. The deliberation of the rhetorical dimension of *Heart of Darkness* will take up quite a few pages, as I find the very characteristic way Marlow's story is recounted to contain some of the most powerful subversions of the imperial worldview

Subversion of the Quest Structure

Brief outlines of *King Solomon's Mines* and *Heart of Darkness* can make the two stories seem more similar than they actually are. Both are ostensibly about middle-aged men, who, not without second thoughts, become involved in quests to find missing persons, undertaking strenuous journeys that take them to the far reaches of the known world. Though adversity beset them, they return home and are able to recount the story to an audience. The way the story is told is of course of the utmost importance, and it is here that *Heart of Darkness* radically departs from the adventure story tradition it relates to. Considered on its own terms, however, the plot of *Heart of Darkness,* although it superficially is built around the same quest structure *as King Solomon's Mines*, is also the scene of many of Conrad's subversive tactics. Since it first was published in 1899, *Heart of Darkness* has confounded audiences expecting the story to conform to the typical adventure story traits. *Heart of Darkness* makes

use of the adventure story framework, but in the process of using it the novella both breaks out of it, and breaks it.

Marlow himself is often making references to other literature or myths. From his Dantean description of stepping "into the gloomy circle of some Inferno" (16) or his appraisal of the knitting women in the Company's office as kin to the mythological Fates presiding over a man's life, it is clear that Marlow himself opens up the possibility for understanding his journey in storybook terms. However, Marlow's journey is an uneasy fit for the traditional quest structure, and the conventional elements that are there, to my mind serve to highlight the subversions more than anything else.

It is clear from the beginning of *Heart of Darkness* that Marlow is not what Bakhtin would call "a person of chance". Rather than being thrown into action, or being propositioned to go like Quatermain, Marlow himself seeks out the job on the steamer that takes him up the river. He describes how he is charmed to go by the snakelike form of a river on a map of the African interior,

> And as I looked at the map of it in a shop-window, it fascinated me as a snake would a bird -- a silly little bird. Then I remembered there was a big concern, a Company for trade on that river. Dash it all! I thought to myself, they can't trade without using some kind of craft on that lot of fresh water -- steamboats! Why shouldn't I try to get charge of one? I went on along Fleet Street, but could not shake off the idea. The snake had charmed me. (8)

But ultimately, the decision to go is his and his alone. Marlow might be seen to go simply because he wants an adventure. In terms of the rules of the adventure story this is an obvious infraction. Usually, the quest of the adventure story hero becomes either a necessity of circumstance or something that is required to keep intact one's honour as an English gentleman. For Marlow, neither of these conditions applies. As opposed to Quatermain, Marlow himself sets the wheels into motion, even going so far as to use his contacts, something he calls "a fresh departure for me. I was not used to get things that way, you know" (8). Already at this point the typical adventure story framework groans under the pressure put on it by Conrad. Not only does Marlow not have events pushed on him, he seeks out "helpers", in the form of his aunt in Brussels, rather than meeting them by chance, as the quest formula requires.

Marlow meeting a series of functionaries doing pointless jobs on his journey up the river is more in line with the standard notion of the adventure hero encountering helpers and enemies along the way towards the final confrontation and resolution. However, the people

Marlow meets on his way prove so eminently unhelpful that their existence instead of a compliance of adventure story traits suggests a clear pastiche of them. Among the people he meets is a brick maker, who is waiting for straws from Europe, an accountant (eerily prescient of Nazi Germany's) who seem more concerned with starching his collars and keeping his ledgers in order than what goes on around him, exhibiting "a gentle annoyance" (18) at the groans of the sick man dying in his office, and a Russian "harlequin" and devotee of Kurtz, whose hut provides Marlow with a mystery that fizzles out into banality. Neither of them fulfils their traditional adventure story function, indeed even the 'enemies' offer little in the way of antagonism, since Marlow is able to see right through them.

The greatest subversion of Marlow's journey in terms of the quest structure, though, is that the object of his quest remains uncharacteristically elusive all the way through. Unlike Quatermain, and most other protagonists of the adventure story, Marlow does not set out with a clear goal. Unlike the medieval romantic knight, he has no grail waiting for him at the end of his quest, nor a fair damsel to save. Unlike Quatermain, he has heard no old legends of the place he is going to, and unlike both Quatermain and the Eldorado Expedition Marlow meets along the way, he seems to have no expectation of personal enrichment waiting at the end of his adventure. In spite of the apparent impossibility of finding meaning in what he experiences on his journey, or maybe rather because of it, Marlow seems to acquire a grail of sorts along the way. As the trip upriver progresses, Kurtz appears more and more intriguing to Marlow. "I wasn't very interested in him. Still, I was curious to see whether this man, who had come equipped with moral ideas of some sort, would climb to the top after all, and how he would set about his work when there" (31). For Marlow, Kurtz seems to become a key to understanding the madness surrounding him, and thus Kurtz also becomes the goal of his journey.

Marlow relates his "approach to this Kurtz grubbing for ivory in the wretched bush" by again turning to the literary allusion, claiming that "[the journey] was beset by as many dangers as though he had been an enchanted princess sleeping in a fabulous castle" (42). This quote both invokes the fairy tale, one of the purest uses of the quest structure on which the adventure story is based, and at the same time shows how absurd Marlow finds his situation to be. When he meets Kurtz, his derelict station house is far from a fabulous castle, and the enchantments on him will unfortunately not disappear with a kiss. Marlow is also to be disappointed with the answers Kurtz fail to supply him with. I think Marlow's wish for the quest to have meaning illuminate the strange and ambivalent relationship Marlow has with Kurtz. If the 'grail' would prove to be completely empty (or hollow, as the case may be), this

would undermine the quest, and render the entire adventure story up to their meeting pointless. Marlow wishes to find something of value that he can bring away from the encounter with Kurtz. However, the obscure insight he seems to think he has found, appears to be made of the same stuff as the fog on the river or the slithery shadows inside Kurtz's hut, threatening to slip out of his hands at any given moment.

While both Quatermain and Marlow return home, in accordance with the perceived scheme of the genre that after all requires a homecoming for the story to be complete, they do so very differently. Quatermain returns with diamonds worth millions, enabling him to set himself up as a landlord in an estate close to his aristocratic friend Sir Henry Curtis. Marlow's rewards, however, seem to be both much less tangible and of less joy to him. He returns with insights that seem just out of his grasp and truths that he cannot bring himself to tell to those that need to hear them. By subverting the quest structure that underlies the genre of the adventure story, *Heart of Darkness* disabuses or robs, depending on how you look at it, the adventure story genre of its naivety. What Marlow was unable to do to Kurtz's Intended, Conrad does to his audience. A reader having finished *Heart of Darkness* may find it hard to go back to the more traditional adventure stories, and if the reader does, he or she will find it hard to read them in the same way.

Notions of Englishness: Subverting the Stories We Tell Ourselves

Conrad by all accounts appears to have had a complex relationship with his adopted homeland, something that no doubt influences his treatment of the country in his literary work. This is not least apparent in the much more complex way notions of Englishness are dealt with in Conrad's text than in Haggard's work. While the Englishmen we meet as colonizers in *King Solomon's Mines* are uniformly upstanding and unblemished examples of the specimen, *Heart of Darkness* paints a different picture of the imperial effort.

What I usually refer in this thesis as the traditional adventure story of the late nineteenth century is often also termed "imperial romances". And this is sometimes an apt term, since these stories very often did exactly what that term suggests in romanticizing the British Empire and the men who worked to expand it and further its glory. The 'uncivilized' areas, the unknown spots of the map, take on a dual function during this time, acting both as a proving ground for the worth and strength of the British individual and as a living proof of how far western civilization had moved beyond the African reality.

As among others David Spurr has shown, the very language used in imperial discourse often represents Africa as a negative space, by focusing on what is not there. By using Europe

as the standard against which everything is measured, any perceived lacks or wants serve to cast European superiority into relief and pave the way for the 'civilizing mission'(Spurr 92-107). Even many of the liberal minds of the late Victorian era, who would be critical of the exploitive history of colonialism, subscribed to the idea of African natives as 'younger brothers' in need of help and direction from the older, wiser Europeans. At the same time as Europe was exploiting Africa's natural resources, Europeans could do so under the convenient pretence of bringing progress to the backwaters, and helping those unable to help themselves. As I attempted to show in the previous chapter, *King Solomon's Mines*, despite its political subversions, did not stray far from these accepted notions of the imperial discourse.

If we start by comparing the way European men are portrayed in the two books, it becomes immediately clear how large the difference is. Sir Henry Curtis, Quatermain's aristocratic companion and the driving force behind the expedition, is drawn in broad strokes as a living embodiment of the high moral values of the British aristocracy. Some of his self-satisfied exclamations are quite over the top, almost into self-parody: "'Tell him' answered Sir Henry, "that he mistakes an Englishman. Wealth is good, and if it comes in our way we will take it; but a gentleman does not sell himself for wealth" (Haggard 98). While this is patently untrue, even in the world of *King Solomon's Mines*, where Sir Henry's brother can be seen to do just that, the comparison with Marlow's description of life around the outer station highlights how different the two books portrayal of Europeans are. Marlow details how "the word 'ivory' rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it" (23). Not only selling themselves for it, the 'gentlemen' in *Heart of Darkness* are involved in a constant treacherous free-for-all, where everybody at the station, supposedly civilized men there to do a job, is stabbing each other's back to get the most loot.

Along with searching for diamonds and lost brothers, the protagonists of *King Solomon's Mines* also find time to reform the judiciary system of Kukuanaland. In return for helping the rightful king to his throne through a revolution, Sir Henry extracts a promise from him that "the smelling out of witches […] [and] the killing of people without trial shall not take place in the land" (110). As I discussed in the last chapter, this seems to comply with the notion that the English export civilization, leaving the country in better shape than it was when they came there.

In *Heart of Darkness,* Marlow, just like Quatermain and Sir Henry do, finds a reign of terror upon reaching his destination. However, in perhaps the most impressive subversion in a book full of them, Conrad's story twists the expected relationship between civilized and primitive. The darkness at the heart of this reign of terror is imported from Europe, rather than

something native to the region. Kurtz seems to have set up a rule that is just as cruel and arbitrary as that of the native king Twala of Kukuanaland, at least if his choice of decorations around his abode is anything to go by. We are never told outright, but Kurtz seems to have set himself up as a king for the native tribes, who "adored him" (56). As the Russian – Kurtz's sometimes assistant – tells Marlow, Kurtz is not above killing his friends, if they do not please him. The Russian mentions an episode where he failed to give Kurtz some ivory he had earned for himself, upon which he was threatened at gunpoint. "There was nothing on earth preventing [Kurtz] from killing who he jolly well pleased" (56). There is also the eerie sense that Kurtz has crossed some boundary that even Marlow is afraid to inquire into, and he stops the Russian before he can go into details about how the tribal chiefs bowed to Kurtz ascendency. "I don't want to know anything of the ceremonies used when approaching Mr. Kurtz" I shouted (58).

Marlow (and Conrad), seems to think that Kurtz having set himself up "amongst the devils of the land" (58) puts him in a different league than the "pure, uncomplicated savagery" (ibid.) that existed before he arrived. While uncomplicated savagery, if one can call Twala's rule in *King Solomon's Mine*s that, is bad enough, the idea of a "civilized" man reverting to barbarism is presented as somehow worse. "After all, that was only a savage sight, while I seemed at one bound to have been transported into some lightless region of subtle horrors, where pure, uncomplicated savagery was a positive relief, being something that had a right to exist -- obviously -- in the sunshine" (ibid.) Kurtz's misrule of the Inner station directly contradicts the image of all imperial discourse in general, and the image of white men projected in *King Solomon's Mines* specifically. Whereas the white men in that book directly contribute to the end of a dreadful system, in Conrad's novella they induce it, both in the form of the callous capitalism of the Company, and the idealistic madness of Kurtz.

In *King Solomon's Mines* the European man's objects of progress – such as the gun, or the almanac with its ability to predict a solar eclipse – proves of enormous import to the protagonists, allowing them to conquer and succeed in their quest. This seems typical of the way European superiority was imparted on the natives both in fact and fiction. By brandishing objects so advanced as to seem like magic to the people unaccustomed to them, the European invaders were able to be received as gods, with all the respect that elevated position awarded among superstitious tribes. Quatermain and company, though self-appointed gentlemen, seem to have no scruples about representing themselves as gods or "people from the stars", and using the natives own superstitions against them. In fact, Quatermain seems to make this way

of dealing with natives a habit, relying on their superstitions to keep them in check. A local man, appointed with the task of keeping the party's elephant rifles and beasts of burden safe and sound while the English continue their journey is told that

> when we came back, if one of those things was missing I would kill him and his people by witchcraft; and if we died and he tried to steal the rifles I would come and haunt him and turn his cattle mad and his milk sour till life was a weariness, and would make the devils in the guns come out and talk to him in a way he did not like. (48)

In *Heart of Darkness*, Kurtz appears equally free of scruples. The Russian explains that "he came to [the natives] with thunder and lightning, you know -- and they had never seen anything like it -- and very terrible" (56). While in *King Solomon's Mines* technology is presented as a force for good, *Heart of Darkness* makes the case much more ambivalent, showing that technology is no better than the man wielding it and that in the wrong hands a gun is just as powerful as in the right.

In his open letter to King Leopold, George Washington Williams indignantly details some of the low 'tricks' used by Henry Stanley to make the African chiefs sign over their villages to King Leopold (122). Again, as was the case for much of the colonial period, real life and the adventure story seem to intertwine, as Stanley's tricks seem just as imaginative as those of his literary counterparts. That the supposed 'civilizers' chose to hide the particulars of technology from their 'younger brothers' and use it, in combination with the superstitions they fanned, rather than put out, as a tool to keep the native subservient speaks worlds about how far their humanitarian intent went.

Subverted Notions of Civilization

In *King Solomon's Mines* the view of the colonial effort as a positive and civilizing force is largely allowed to stand unopposed. *Heart of Darkness*, on the other hand, presents the notions of colonialism and Englishness in a significantly more conflicted way, where the entire concept of 'civilized' behaviour is questioned and destabilized. Chinua Achebe in his famous reading suggests that Kurtz would have done well to stay away from Africa. He claims that Conrad in his prose puts forth the notion that it is Africa that corrupts the civilized men and for this reason is to blame for the unspeakable things that happen. I tend to think that the situation is opposite. It is the 'civilized' men who corrupt Africa. To my mind, one of the things Conrad does in *Heart of Darkness* is to question so-called Western civilization, and to what extent its supposedly humane values actually hold up when they are put under stress.

"Cut loose" from the checks and balances present on the individual in the highly regulated European societies, and away from the critical eye of what the European mind considers its peers, only the strength of the individual's moral worth decides what can happen. Conrad seems to suggest that there is no inherit quality in European man that makes him more civilized than the natives of the Congo. That Kurtz and others 'go bad' while living in Africa should be blamed as much, or more so, on their (the European's) *perceived* sense of lawlessness, than on any actual lawlessness that they found when they arrived.

Furthermore, the supposed 'civilizing mission' in many instances removed and dissolved the native social structures and its checks and balances. By doing so, the European interventionists themselves created a lawless society that furthered their point that the natives needed guidance and a helping hand in governing themselves. Marlow seems to recognize this. If an alien force invaded England and removed the comfortable gilded cage where a man is "moored with two good addresses, like a hulk with two anchors, a butcher round one corner, a policeman round another"(47), surrounded by "kind neighbours ready to cheer you or to fall on you" (49) and kept in check by the constant threat of "scandal and gallows and lunatic asylums" (ibid.), Marlow, and Conrad with him, seems to think that only the individual's restraint keeps him from going wrong. The major thing civilization appears to have going for it is the proximity of peers. Marlow intimates this with his aside describing how European men tend to experience the African reality: "No warning voice of a kind neighbour can be heard whispering of public opinion? These little things make all the great difference. When they are gone you must fall back upon your own innate strength, upon your own capacity for faithfulness" (ibid.).

If 'civilization' thus is to be understood as a concept where each individual man is being kept in check by the fear of his surroundings' reaction, then some of the natives are much more 'civilized' than the Europeans in the story. Marlow marvels at the restraint shown by the enlisted crew members he refers to as "cannibals", though they are never shown doing any cannibalizing. Even after a "considerable quantity" of the their food store of rotten hippo meat is thrown overboard by the pilgrims, and though they are denied the opportunity to use their hard earned pay of nine inch- piece of a brass wire a week to buy food in riverside villages, the cannibals remain calm. Marlow tries to grasp what keeps them from killing and eating himself and the other white men, but is unable to do so:

> Why in the name of all the gnawing devils of hunger they didn't go for us -- they were thirty to five -- and have a good tuck-in for once, amazes me now when I think of it. They were big powerful men, with not much capacity to weigh the consequences, with

> courage, with strength, even yet, though their skins were no longer glossy and their muscles no longer hard. […]
> Yes; I looked at them as you would on any human being, with a curiosity of their impulses, motives, capacities, weaknesses, when brought to the test of an inexorable physical necessity.
>
> Restraint! What possible restraint? Was it superstition, disgust, patience, fear -- or some kind of primitive honour? No fear can stand up to hunger, no patience can wear it out, disgust simply does not exist where hunger is; and as to superstition, beliefs, and what you may call principles, they are less than chaff in a breeze. [..] (41-42).

Even though Marlow is unable to fathom where this restraint comes from, his audience might have a few suggestions. Of course, since these supposed cannibals are never seen eating any human flesh, the possibility exists that they are not cannibals at all, no matter how their teeth are filed. There is, however, a dialogue that suggests that given the right circumstances the crew would in fact eat human flesh, as when the men aboard the ship hear a shriek in the fog:

> 'Catch 'im,' he snapped, with a bloodshot widening of his eyes and a flash of sharp teeth -- 'catch 'im. Give 'im to us.' 'To you, eh?' I asked; 'what would you do with them?' 'Eat 'im!' he said curtly, and, leaning his elbow on the rail, looked out into the fog in a dignified and profoundly pensive attitude (40).

That some men seem to be deemed suitable for eating, while others are not, may suggest that the restraint the crew shows in not eating the fellow crewmembers or passengers of the ship is socially predicated. What if the 'cannibal' crew-members are able to refrain from giving in to their hunger because they are part of a social fellowship, observed by their peers and held by the laws or traditions that govern them? These laws and traditions are just as invisible to Marlow and his understanding as they were to the colonizers that came and tore the native societies apart, wishing to rebuild them in their own European image. This may be the reason why Marlow seems unable to grasp the cannibals' restraint. While for him the Congo River seems a place where no such laws can exist and where people could have "no earthly reason for any kind of scruple" (42), the native crew-members are closer to home and kept in check by the social contracts that govern their group, and for some reason this makes the rest of the people on the boat off-limits at meal-time. On this reading, the 'cannibals' restraint becomes even more impressive, considering what the white men had done to their homelands. That any sense of social order can still exist, despite the best efforts of the European overlords to tear the individual away from his tribe, religion, and family, further underscores the strong tribal law and the ethics that must have governed these groups before the outsiders arrived.

Cultural Relativism

Marlow is unable to see what supports this 'civilized' sort of behaviour from the cannibals, if we agree to define being restrained by laws as civilized behaviour. At other times, though, he seems open to the suggestion that there are in fact sides of African society and the native's behaviour that as an outsider and a European, he is not privy to. I tend to disagree both with David Spurr's notion that Marlow's description of Africa as an expanse without any definite boundaries negates the primacy of the African continent and Achebe's claims that Conrad robs the Africans of their humanity by denying them speech. Instead, I find that Marlow's constant inability to make sense of his surroundings and the native language underlines the primary failure (or most horrendous act of duplicity for those in the know) of the European colonial effort: there is no attempt or will to understand the continent and people the Europeans imposed themselves on, and neither country nor people were 'empty' in any sense of the word.

In the previous chapter I detailed how Quatermain's narrative voice was centred in his Englishness, and how the descriptions, especially of the natives they met on their journey often were marked by a comparison to European values. The closer something resembles something English, or the more the European could see of himself in the native, the more their value increased. This is, as I claimed then, a typical feature of imperial discourse. Marlow, however, is different from the usual reporters of the imperial outposts. He knows words, and that they can be used to both obfuscate and elucidate. One of the delights of reading his narration is the way in which he with ironic relish pierces the hypocrisy of the story Europeans tell themselves about their purpose in Africa, and the language they use to do so. He shows how the way people and events are referenced in the official missives are totally irrational and arbitrary. When he hears that the human heads around Kurtz's hut are "the heads of rebels", Marlow responds by shocked laughter: "Rebels! What would be the next definition I was to hear? There had been enemies, criminals, workers -- and these were rebels. Those rebellious heads looked very subdued to me on their sticks" (58).

There are also instances in *Heart of Darkness* where Marlow essays something that today would be described as cultural relativism. He sometimes attempts to enter the headspace of the native experiencing imperialism from the receiving end, often using humour to highlight the absurdity of it. Even before he starts telling his story aboard the *Nellie*, Marlow offers a jab at imperialism while discussing his role among the people aboard.

> I had then, as you remember, just returned to London after a lot of Indian Ocean, Pacific, China Seas -- a regular dose of the East -- six years or so, and I was loafing about, hindering you fellows in your work and invading your homes, just as though I had got a heavenly mission to civilize you. (7)

The final comparison here reveals that Marlow is far more sceptical of imperialism than what was common at the time. Rather than being indignant, he has already resorted to irony, suggesting that what people on heavenly ordained civilizing mission really do amounts to "loafing about", invading people's homes and hindering them in their work. This suggestion may also be seen as an attempt to understand colonization from the native's point of view, something that must have seemed to be rather quaint to his audience at a time where natives left to their own devices were seen as barely having homes, much less "work" that would be worthy of the appellation.

Another attempt from Marlow at understanding the native culture is signalled by his constant speculation about the drums that they sometimes hear in the distance. While Marlow's constant portrayal of his surroundings as hard to understand to Achebe is a sign of racism, I think it instead should be understood as an honest attempt at making sense of a chaotic experience. Thus, I do not think Marlow is saying that something is unknowable; merely that *he* does not understand it at this point in time. Consider his musing on the drums: "At night sometimes the roll of the drums behind the curtain of trees would run up the river and remain sustained faintly, as if hovering in the air over our heads, till the first break of day. *Weather this meant war, piece or prayer, we could not tell"* (35, my italics). Marlow is here plainly ascribing the lack of understanding to himself and the rest of the Europeans. Another instance of the drums being heard is even more revealing in claiming that meaning can exist outside of the reach of the European mind: "[…] a sound weird, appealing, suggestive, and wild – and *perhaps with as profound a meaning as the sound of bells in a Christian country"* (20, my italics). To suggest that the African drums might be of similar import as European church bells is to me an impressive act of cultural relativism for the time.

There are also other occurrences of relativism, where Marlow through his juxtapositions shows his audience that the native's reaction to flee the village from the invaders is natural, and one that would be repeated by English country people, if the situation was the other way around:

> Well if a lot of mysterious niggers armed with all kinds of fearful weapons suddenly took to travelling on the road between Deal and Gravesend catching the yokels right

> and left to carry heavy loads for them, I fancy every farm and cottage around there would get empty very soon.. I passed through several abandoned villages. (19-20)

We note that the term "nigger" is matched by a derisive term for English country people in "yokels".

In the final example of relativism that I will highlight, Marlow shows he is aware that though the English generally seemed to differentiate the white men's colonial efforts on the basis of their countries, all of the white men seem similar to the native having his land invaded. Though he is an Englishman, he is part of the imperialist system responsible for the atrocities he witnesses. This makes him, at the least guilty by association. He is "also one of the Workers, with a capital W-- you know. Something like an emissary of light, something like a lower sort of apostle" (12). However much he wants to get away from it, the sardonic final line in the scene below shows that he knows he cannot.

> […] seeing a white man on the path, [the native officer in charge of the "prisoners"] hoisted his weapon to his shoulder with alacrity. This was simple prudence, white men being so much alike at a distance that he could not tell who I might be. He was speedily reassured, and with a large, white, rascally grin, and a glance at his charge, seemed to take me into partnership in his exalted trust. After all, I also was a part of the great cause of these high and just proceedings." (16).

In this instance Marlow is again viewing the situation from a native's point of view and no matter how however derisively and ironically he frames the scene, doing so makes him arrive at what must be an uncomfortable realization: Simply by knowing what is going on, he is responsible for the continuation of the 'proceedings'. If the other white men are complicit in acts of imperialist rule and suppression, Marlow is similarly involved.

Destabilization of the Narrative in *Heart of Darkness*

Seen against the backdrop of the typical adventure story narration that H. Rider Haggard arguably took to its apex in *King Solomon's Mines*, with its insistence on objectivity and "fact", the narration of *Heart of Darkness* appears even more radical. Though it ostensibly shares the same sort of quest structure (though very much subject to Conrad's subversive tactics, as discussed above) the way the story is told, its *mode* if you will, is wildly divergent. The final part of this chapter will detail some of the differences in narration between the two texts, aiming to show how the way the story is told in *Heart of Darkness* subverts the authority of imperial discourse. To do this, I will provide examples of how Conrad in *Heart of*

Darkness both destabilizes the role of the adventure story narrator, and the relationship between the teller of the tale and his audience.

Ostensibly both *King Solomon's Mines* and *Heart of Darkness* are as first-person accounts. This was a form that, as previously mentioned, had been popularized through its use in travel literature and the journals of author-explorers. The form had, however also been used to great success in adventure stories like R.L Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1881-82) just a few years prior to the publication of *King Solomon's Mines*, so Haggard's use of the form in an adventure story had its antecedents. On account of the form's strong link to the genre of travel writing, the use of a first-person narrator can be seen as a bid for authority.

In the previous chapter I detailed how many of the narrative features of Quatermain's account were borrowed from travel literature, and suggested that Haggard did so in order to underline the authority of his narrator and the story told. Quatermain's story is intended to be as reliable as possible; he describes himself as a regular, not particularly brave man, but one who knows what he is doing, having been an elephant hunter for 20 years. He includes details, even lists about what guns and provisions they brought along, and seems to strive to provide an accurate and meticulous view of events. The author's intent is clearly to be taken on his word. Quatermain's narrative voice is the voice of imperial discourse, providing a steadfast view of how things *really are,* in a paternal and authorial tone that invites no questions as to the nature of the persons, places and situations his party encounters. The contrast to Marlow's tentative narration could hardly be greater.

Quatermain's recollections are written down and authoritative. The use of features inherited from travel literature like maps, footnotes and small hints of being based on an expedition diary lend even more weight to his observations. Marlow's tale on the other hand, foregoes these features, and indeed the entire pretence of textuality. Marlow's tale is a story told by one man to some of his peers, which just happens to be written down by one of the listeners. The narrative setup in *Heart of Darkness* is thus far more complex than the one in Haggard's work, as Marlow's reminiscences are relayed through another first person frame narrator, unknown to us, in a sort of nested narrative. The main story of the book is consequently retold in written form by a listener to a story which itself is told again.

This difference in narrative setup should signal to the reader that Conrad's intentions are rather different than Haggard's. Instead of borrowing authority from the typical style of travel literature, the narration of *Heart of Darkness* can be seen to borrow from an older form. The oral storytelling situation set up within the story with Marlow in the middle and his audience around him, listening rather than reading, is a continuation of a tradition that

probably is as old as language itself. That Conrad seeks to remove his narration from the written nature of other adventure stories suggests that he is not concerned with providing Marlow with the authority of the author-explorer in his telling. Nor it seems, is Marlow. His narrative focuses on the psychology rather than the minutiae of expeditionary life.

Instead of detailing the flora and fauna of the African landscape he moves through, as do Quatermain and the scientific travel writers, Marlow describes also the landscape in psychological terms, exemplified by the paradoxical "The earth seemed unearthly" (36). Throughout his narration, Marlow seems more interested in the effects of the unknowable landscape upon him and his crew than in providing his listeners with details of scenery. Tellingly, when Marlow apologizes it is not for his lack of sophistication in the telling of the tale, but rather for bothering his listeners with "how [he] got out there, what [he] saw, how [he] went up that river" (7), which of course are the exact things that would be deemed valuable and interesting in travel literature and more traditional adventure stories.

The main story in *Heart of Darkness* is prefaced by the frame narrator's description of the events surrounding the storytelling situation. While I will return to the relationship between Marlow and his audience in the next section, the frame narrator's characterization of Marlow's tale belongs to this discussion. From the very beginning, the audience appears to know and accept the nature of Marlow's storytelling, and how it differs from traditional stories. When Marlow introduces his story by saying "I suppose you fellows remember I did once turn fresh-water sailor for a bit," the frame narrator comments: "we knew we were fated, before the ebb began to run, to hear about one of Marlow's inconclusive experiences" (7). To me, "inconclusive" suggests that there is no easy moral to draw from the experience, or perhaps that Marlow refuses to do so for his audience. Either way, in its refusal to moralise Marlow's tale is unique compared to the traditional adventure story, which typically resembles the frame narrator's description of a seaman's tale, having "a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut" (5).

Marlow, unlike Quatermain, appears for large portions of his story confused and unable to comprehend the world around him. He is forever considering the meaning of situations, rather than representing them through "objective" facts. In contrast with Quatermain's capable explanations, Marlow does not claim to have reliable answers; indeed his depictions of events are often more suggestive than explicit. He second-guesses himself, and oft-times finds himself reduced to describing things in ways that impart neither information nor authorial evaluation. Much of what he sees appears to him to have no meaning: "Still, one must look about sometimes; and then I saw this station, these men

strolling aimlessly about in the sunshine of the yard. I asked myself sometimes what it all meant" (23).

Whereas Quatermain and his aforementioned "Editor" both seem to have a good grip of the facts of Quatermain's story, Marlow's frame narrator struggles to understand the story being told. When the frame narrator's presence makes itself known in Marlow's short breaks from recounting his story, this presence is also questioning rather than enlightening, as the following quote demonstrates:

> "It had become so pitch dark that we listeners could hardly see one another. For a long time already he, sitting apart, had been no more to us than a voice. There was not a word from anybody. The others might have been asleep, but I was awake. I listened, I listened on the watch for the sentence, for the word, that would give me the clue to the faint uneasiness inspired by this narrative that seemed to shape itself without human lips in the heavy night-air of the river." (27)

Just like Quatermain, Marlow states the reason for telling his story; but unlike him, Marlow does not think his story is extraordinary in any way. In strong contrast to travel literature which aimed to present unknown parts of the world to a reader, the value of Marlow's story is primarily to himself and *his* understanding of the world. This is an important difference.

> "I don't want to bother you much with what happened to me personally," he began, showing in this remark the weakness of many tellers of tales who seem so often unaware of what their audience would best like to hear; "yet to understand the effect of it on me you ought to know how I got out there, what I saw, how I went up that river to the place where I first met the poor chap. It was the farthest point of navigation and the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me—and into my thoughts. It was somber enough too—and pitiful—not extraordinary in any way—not very clear either. No, not very clear. And yet it seemed to throw a kind of light." (8)

Marlow's uncommon way of expressing his experiences, and his constant search for meaning as he interrupts himself and turns events over in his mind, makes sense if seen in the light of his purpose for telling the story. On one hand, he is attempting to impart his readers with his unclear insights from this "culminating point of [his] existence". On the other hand, he is repeating the story for his own benefit, trying to wring new significance out of a tale he has told before. I think the idea of this story as a new iteration of the story he told to Kurtz's

Intended makes sense. At that time, he ended it with a big lie: "'The last word he pronounced was – your name'" (77). That Marlow is now retelling the story of his own

volition, coupled with his constant musings on the meaning of things, suggests to this reader that Marlow is trying to get some new sense out of the story, perhaps using what he has learned since these events in the past to wrangle new meaning from what on previous occasions seemed impossible to contain in words.

Marlow and His Audience

The next section of this chapter will discuss the peculiar relationship between Marlow and his audiences, considering how this relationship is another feature that destabilizes the traditional form of the adventure story. While the footnotes which I suggested provided a thin narrative layer on top of Quatermain's story constitute the complicating narrative feature in *King Solomon's Mines*, there are many such features in *Heart of Darkness.* A significant one is the existence of two separate, but in some ways also interlinked audiences: one within the book, and one without. While this is the case also in *King Solomon's Mines*, it never really draws attention to itself in that book, perhaps because Quatermain's son, to whom the written text is ostensibly addressed, is so similar to the perceived outer audience consisting of young, often gentle-born men, being groomed for imperial positions. Quatermain's narrative tone in addressing his son is just the same as other adventure story narrators, who as I previously have described, often inhabited the voice of paternity. The similar positioning of the internal and external audience in *King Solomon's Mines* thus ensures that any cognitive dissonance is avoided.

In *Heart of Darkness*, though, the multiplicity of voices and the dissonance of meaning are at the centre of its narrative, constituting maybe the book's most remarkable feature, setting up a seemingly infinite stage for conflicting interpretations. White notes that "Marlow is not so much Conrad's spokesman as a strategic innovation that served his purposes in disrupting the generic adventure story and its essentially dangerous monolithic illusions" (177). By letting other voices exist within the book, and by destabilizing the authority of Marlow as the primary narrator, Conrad can challenge the imperial discourse and its monopoly on creating meaning.

While in the previous chapter I discussed why I found Quatermain's narration to join the multitude of adventure story narrators who have a somewhat parental tone towards their audience, Marlow's narration is of a different character. Marlow's tone is sardonic, and he often uses ironic understatements or absurd juxtapositions of dialogue and descriptions to put his point across. His sometimes mocking manner is completely different from that of

Quatermain, who – though occasionally tongue in cheek and not above some good-natured pokes or nudges – never actually confronts his audience.

Marlow's in-story audience is made up of practically-minded men who have 'made it' in the world and all now enjoy solid careers. Their numbers include a director of companies, a lawyer and an accountant – all vocations that must be considered part of the establishment.

> The Director of Companies was our captain and our host. We four affectionately watched his back as he stood in the bows looking to seaward[...].
> Between us there was, as I have already said somewhere, the bond of the sea. Besides holding our hearts together through long periods of separation, it had the effect of making us tolerant of each other's yarns -- and even convictions. The Lawyer -- the best of old fellows -- had, because of his many years and many virtues, the only cushion on deck, and was lying on the only rug. The Accountant had brought out already a box of dominoes, and was toying architecturally with the bones. (*3*)

Interestingly, all of these occupations have their parallels in the Belgian company in which Marlow comes to be employed, which suggests that it is not unfeasible that some of these men also are occupied with Britain's colonial effort. In any case it would not seem presumptuous to expect that these men are probably more complacent than Marlow about the nature of imperialism, since he seems to be something of an outsider in that regard. The frame narrator, whose occupation is not mentioned, seems to be more taken with the glory of the imperialist project than Marlow. His description of the river Thames and the people who had sailed out on it at least seems to suggest a more gullible attitude than Marlow's:

> […]messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an unknown earth! … The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires. (5)

The frame-narrator's seemingly romantic notions concerning the colonial efforts may put him more in line with Conrad's readers of *Blackwood's Magazine*. This makes him an ideal middleman between the disillusioned Marlow and the reading audience. However, as the story progresses, the frame narrator's discomfort with the story told seems to make him more uncertain as well:

> [..]I listened on the watch for the sentence, for the word, that would give me the clue to the faint uneasiness inspired by this narrative that seemed to shape itself without human lips in the heavy night-air of the river. (27)

Though the group listening to Marlow are more or less friends, or at least respectful acquaintances, "the bond of the sea" being between them, as the frame narrator puts it, there nonetheless seems to be a gap of understanding between them. Though respected and even prominent members of society, Marlow appears to find them naïve, and out of touch with what really goes on. On one level he is talking to his peers, but on another there is the implication that he has experienced things they haven't and for that reason he struggles even more to put his uncertain notions across. At some points he seems to despair at the absurdity of telling the solid men that make up his audience about experiences that seem to be without the scope of language,

> Do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see anything? It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream -- making a vain attempt, because no relation of a dream can convey the dream-sensation, that commingling of absurdity, surprise, and bewilderment in a tremor of struggling revolt, that notion of being captured by the incredible which is of the very essence of dreams. . . . (27)

Marlow, however, recognizes his own import as a trustworthy guide to these impossible notions: "of course in this you fellows see more than I could then. You see me, whom you know. . . ." (ibid.). Reacting to an implied question of his actions during one of the more frenzied episodes of his account, the attack on the steamer, Marlow confronts his storytelling audience directly, seemingly holding their comfortable lives against them:

> "Absurd!" he cried. "This is the worst of trying to tell. . . . Here you all are, each moored with two good addresses, like a hulk with two anchors, a butcher round one corner, a policeman round another, excellent appetites, and temperature normal -- you hear -- normal from year's end to year's end. And you say, Absurd! Absurd be -- exploded! Absurd! My dear boys, what can you expect from a man who out of sheer nervousness had just flung overboard a pair of new shoes! (47)

The designation "My dear boys" can be both a term of endearment towards his friends, but also a slight putdown – a boy is after all traditionally someone who lacks both the schooling and the experiences of a man. This untypical outcry of Marlow's works on a double level, where he for an instance can be seen to reach out of the frame story to directly address the reading audience, who to a large degree probably also would be made up of privileged men or women with excellent appetites and normal temperatures.

While Andrea White credits Haggard with challenging his readers through the uncomfortable and excessive representation of violence, Conrad's strategy for challenging his audiences is radically different. Whereas the challenge in Haggard's text is forceful and

direct, like the battle tactics of the Kukuanas, Conrad instead seems aims for a cumulative effect where the "faint uneasiness" inspired in the frame narrator in time reaches the reading audience as well – the sort of uneasiness imparted by lacking the necessary pieces to make sense of a puzzle, an uneasiness mirroring Marlow's feelings there on the river in the past.

While the notions Marlow struggles to bring across to his audience are subversive in their questioning of imperial truths, the very storytelling setup Conrad utilizes also undermines imperial discourse. White comments on Conrad's narrative setup: "Of course, this external dialogue within the fiction expresses Conrad's own irresolution. The issues were complex, and his allegiances were mixed, but perpetuating the dialogue challenged the simplistic assumptions of the genre" (177). What White calls "perpetuating the dialogue" I understand to include the complex interplay between the frame-narrator and Marlow on the one hand and the audience and Marlow on the other, as well as the interplay between Marlow's younger and older self. In addition Marlow's ambivalence towards the work he is doing, his mixed allegiances, and his general inability to make sense of the situation he is in all contribute to "increase the dialogic possibilities and allow the story to be a struggle between disparate languages and outlooks" (ibid.).

By ensuring this "dialogic" quality, to use Bakhtin's term, no one voice or outlook is allowed to stand out as the "true" one. This is a great leap from the adventure story tradition Conrad superficially uses as his starting point, which, as we have seen, to a large degree came to represent consistent pro-imperialist views. Unlike the narration of *King Solomon's Mines* where no-one or nothing challenges the discursive power of the European narrator, Conrad's modernist style, with its dialogic approach and self-conscious foregrounding of the act of storytelling, acknowledges the existence of other voices. This is both a subversion of the straightforward narratives found in most typical adventure stories and a subversion of the imperialist project itself, which depends on there being one absolute truth, and one right way to which all other ways of living should strive to conform.

Conclusion

This third chapter has detailed some of the many subversive qualities of *Heart of Darkness*, contrasting them with their more straightforward counterparts in *King Solomon's Mines*.

In the first part of the chapter, I have explored how the quest structure of the typical adventure story becomes severely destabilized in Conrad's novella. Marlow is not the typical "adventuristic person", and his quest does not follow the genre's prescribed scheme. I have claimed that the missing goal of the quest is perhaps the largest subversion of the structure,

and although Marlow in time comes to regard Kurtz as his grail' this notion is also subverted when they finally meet.

The next section of the chapter has contrasted the notions of Englishness expressed within *King Solomon's Mines* and *Heart of Darkness* and shown how the latter undermines many of the comfortable lies the reading public were presented with concerning the 'civilizing mission' and the moral right of the European to rule the 'barbaric' native. I argue that Marlow's unresolved question about the cannibals' restraint suggests another way of looking at the relationship between European and African civilization: an African civilization is present, but invisible to European eyes blinded by the illusions propagated through travel writing and adventure stories. I maintain that Marlow shows awareness that this is a lack of the Europeans, rather than a lack in the African reality, as it often would be presented in more traditional adventure stories. I have also given identified and discussed examples of cultural relativism, where Marlow attempts to view imperialism from the point of view of the natives experiencing a European invasion.

In the final part of this chapter, I found that the narrative situation of *Heart of Darkness* is destabilized not only through the use of a more complex interface between the reader and the story told, but also by the way in which Marlow's narration eschews the typical 'insiderness' of adventure story narration. Instead, his account constantly challenges the notions of his seemingly imperial-friendly audience. Finally, I have shown how Conrad, by allowing multiple voices to exist within his adventure story, presents a narrative that is a subversion both of the typically monolithic narration of the adventure story genre and of the imperialist agenda.

Chapter 4

Illuminating Shadowy Ideals

Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*

The relationship between the formulaic adventure story and Joseph's Conrad's writing becomes increasingly complicated with *Lord Jim*. The novel was published in 1900, but by all accounts, Conrad started it before *Heart of Darkness*, and then put it aside for the duration of the writing of that novella, to be finished later. The early critical reception of *Lord Jim* tended to focus on the first half of the book and especially the *Patna* incident and its aftermath, whereas the later half, taking place in Patusan, often was considered to fail to live up to the promise of the first. The markedly different writing style of the latter section and its romance overtones made critics question whether Conrad had suddenly lost his grip of his idiosyncratic, modernist style.

For this chapter, the first part of the book is the one I will focus the least on. While the first part of *Lord Jim* is undoubtedly brilliant in its execution, I find many of the subversive qualities of the book to be more significant in parts written after Conrad returned to it, having completed *Heart of Darkness*. It is almost like the destabilization of the adventure story that Conrad had undertaken in *Heart of Darkness* opened up new avenues for understanding the story Conrad had started telling about the promising young Jim, who appears so typical of the heroes of the genre. In the previous chapter, the comparisons between the most typical generic aspects of *King Solomon's Mines* and their subversion in *Heart of Darkness* served as examples of the dissident nature of the latter text. This chapter will deal with subversions that rely on an understanding of the adventure story genre in relation to the real world situation informing it. While the comparisons to *King Solomon's Mines* still remain productive in this chapter, the juxtapositions will be fewer, as I rely on the chapters leading up to this one to provide ample background for the subversions in *Lord Jim.*

The first of the three main areas of discussion for this final chapter is exactly the strange narrative shifts that occur during the Patusan section of the text. Rather than seeing the shift towards a more romantic or typical narrative as a stylistic blunder or mistake, I believe this modulation – or key change, to borrow a musical term – should be considered a deliberate destabilization of the genre. By playing with the framing of the story Conrad provides another layer of subversion, drawing attention to the fact that discourse is genre-

determined, rather than absolute or fixed. Whereas the typical adventure story presents its world in terms that leave little room for doubt or alternate understandings of the world depicted, *Heart of Darkness* turned this on its head, providing a text where nothing is certain. I will argue that, in *Lord Jim*, Conrad returns to the traditional adventure story elements, but then through playing with framing shows how these can be equally uncertain, and that the certainty of imperial discourse, as observable in *King Solomon's Mines*, is a façade that hides an underlying complexity and perhaps even a lurking doubt.

This chapter's second main area of discussion deals with the subversion of the standard story of the heroic adventure hero protagonist and the notion of idealism as a force for good. I will build on the idea suggested by Andrea White that Conrad's work does this by presenting adventure hero trajectories that differ from the traditional ones we see, for example in *King Solomon's Mines*. White sees Marlow and Kurtz's arcs in *Heart of Darkness* as examples of this phenomenon, as well as Jim's story in this book. However, I believe the many small tales we are presented with in Captain Brierly, the dynamic duo Chester and Robinson, Stein, and finally "Gentleman" Brown, also in various ways show that an idealistic adventure story hero not always ends up with a happy ending.

Finally, the third part of this chapter will deal with the notion of the adventure story genre and its typical heroic model existing within the textual universe of another adventure story, there serving as a standard towards which the protagonists may measure themselves and informing their life choices. I will venture to suggest that Jim (a common name, also the name of the hero in R. L Stevenson's *Treasure Island*) is a representative of the thousands of young boys who read the 'officially sanctioned' adventure stories. In common with many young men, Jim believes in what the stories preach, both of a gentleman's conduct and the way of the world, only to be shaken and at a loss when confronting the real thing.

Subverted Narrative Situation

In *Lord Jim*, Conrad continues with the narrative experiments of *Heart of Darkness*. However, he goes even further with his subversion of the standard form, employing multiple storytellers, nested stories, and even, towards the end of the novel, the epistolary form.

To my mind, the principal difference between the narration in *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim* is that while Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* plays an active role, telling his audience of a story that has happened to him (even though Kurtz' story enters into it), it is Jim's story that is central in *Lord Jim.* In this book, Marlow's primary function is to put together the pieces of Jim's life and collect the separate strands of the story from people who only know

part of it. The young man's life presents a puzzle, and Marlow is the person trying to solve the enigma of Jim. Marlow's function is of course more complicated than being a mere collector. His preoccupation with Jim in itself presents a mystery, and in time, Marlow takes an active part in Jim's life, attempting to help him. He obtains pieces from people who have had dealings with the young man, but he also fills in some gaps in the story with his imagination where the pieces cannot be obtained and voluntarily leave others open for interpretation by his audience.

In some ways, *Lord Jim* calls other genres of fiction strikingly to mind. It becomes an original modernist novel, not least because of the way in which it innovatively combines elements of other genres (See Lothe, 2008). One example is the detective story, where two stories, separated in time, correspond to each other and a detective attempts to collect clues and reconstruct what has happened in the earlier story. The form of *Heart of Darkness',* though unconventional, still allows it to be read as an adventure story, though the reader's excitement at the twists of the plot is severely undercut by pre-knowledge of the ending, and action makes way for epistemological enquiries. *Lord Jim,* however, may best be understood as the *reconstruction* of an adventure story.

While many of the character vignettes I will discuss later in this chapter serve as condensed examples of the typical adventure story, there are to my mind at least two sections of the main story that consciously adhere to, and interact with, the more typical fiction of the nineteenth century. The most important of these is the Patusan section which I soon will return to. However, the very opening of the book also differs from Conrad's typical style.

In the opening chapters, Jim is described in a way not unlike what is found in one of Charles Dickens' coming-of-age stories. The narrator of this first part is both less nuanced, and interestingly, far more critical and unsympathetic towards Jim than what Marlow later proves to be. Linda Dryden sees this very first section to provide hints about Jim's shortcomings, as I will return to in the last part of this chapter. After the first section, detailing Jim's early life and the events up to and including the *Patna* incident narrated in an omniscient narrative style, Marlow starts his account with his first introduction to Jim, at Jim's appearance before a Maritime Court of Inquiry. From this point on Marlow's characteristic deliberative narrative takes over. Dryden puts it like this: "Initially there is an illusion of reading a romantic boys' adventure story. It is with the appearance of Marlow that the complex moral dimension enters the book, and the kaleidoscopic perspectives on Jim's character come into play" (142).

Just like in *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad chooses to present the bulk of the story through something approximating an oral narrative situation, where Marlow recounts a story for a small audience.

> "And later on, many times in distant parts of the world, Marlow showed himself willing to remember Jim, to remember him at length, in detail and audibly. Perhaps it would be after dinner, on a verandah draped in motionless foliage and crowned with flowers, in the deep dusk speckled by fiery cigar-ends. The elongated bulk of each cane-chair harboured a silent listener. (26)

While I in the previous chapter argued for why Marlow's story in *Heart of Darkness* has an iterative quality, there is in this case little doubt that on this occasion Marlow is telling a story he has told before and that this situation illustrates one of a number of retellings. It is easy to imagine how each successive telling of Jim's story is updated with the new information or new insights Marlow has garnered in his quest to solve the puzzle of Jim's life.

Marlow's style of narration changes according to what part of the story he tells. While his descriptions of the scenes from the court are relatively straightforward, those of Patusan are very quixotic and seem to embody the sort of narration found in romance novels. This is the shift in narrative style that has confounded many critics and led them to wonder if Conrad suddenly lost the grip of his own style.

When in Patusan

According to Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, Conrad himself referenced the transition between the *Patna* incident and the Patusan section as a "plague spot" in the novel. Erdinast-Vulcan also describes how critics "almost unanimous, if qualified to various degrees" tend to dismiss the second part of the novel as "a regrettable artistic lapse" (34). Ian Watt registers a "a sense of reduced complexity and rapid confluence of the narrative elements"; John Batchelor claims that the Patusan section presents "a curiously simple moral polarity, a brightly coloured flatness […] it is as though the end of *Lord Jim* were drawn from a part of Conrad's mind different, and shallower than, the consciousness that has created the bulk of the novel" (both qtd. in Erdinast-Vulcan: 34). That the change in narration for this part of the novel is so jarring suggests that there is more going on than an "artistic lapse". Rather than being understood as a throwback to an imperialistic worldview and a failure to fulfil Conrad's modernist narrative, the following section of this chapter will suggest how the Patusan

segment actually is a way to comment on the very same worldview and the ways in which it is presented.

The first part of Jim's story traces his downfall and his failure to live up to the world's and most importantly his own expectations, providing a negation of the quick ascent in rank enjoyed by many heroes of the naval adventure story. The last part of Jim's story, though, falls more in line with the adventure story formula, as Marlow himself alludes to in his comments to the privileged reader:

> You must admit that it is romantic beyond the wildest dreams of his boyhood, and yet there is to my mind a sort of profound and terrifying logic in it[…]. This astounding adventure, of which the most astounding part is that it is true, comes on as an unavoidable consequence. (295)

The sense of the unreal and fantastic about Patusan is not lost on Jim, who seems happy to have found something like a 'lost world' from the adventure stories he treasures, or on Marlow. Nor is it lost on Marlow, who tells his audience:

> "I felt that when to-morrow I had left it for ever, it would slip out of existence, to live only in my memory till I myself passed into oblivion. I have that feeling about me now; perhaps it is that feeling which has incited me to tell you the story, to try to hand over to you, as it were, its very existence, its reality – the truth disclosed in a moment of illusion" (278).

Marlow's sense of the illusionary nature of Patusan disclosing the truth is very apropos what this chapter sets out to do, namely to explain how Conrad in *Lord Jim* discloses and dissects the illusions presented by the typical adventure story.

An example of the stylistic shift that occurs in Patusan is Marlow's narration of the moments after Jim, aided by Jewel, has dispatched three would-be assassins back to Sherif Ali. Marlow lets his imagination run as he describes the scene of the young couple on the riverbank, a scene he did not observe himself. At this point of the story everything Marlow recounts is what Jim told him when Marlow visited him in Patusan. His story is thus based on second-hand information, but at certain points Marlow cannot help but embellish the story with details he could not possibly know. Marlow acknowledges this when he admits that Jim did not tell him everything: "He did not tell me what it was he said when he recovered his voice. I don't suppose he could be very eloquent" (261). The following description though, seems tailored to show, that while Jim might not always be articulate, Marlow certainly is:

> "The world was still, the night breathed on them, one of those nights that seem created for the sheltering of tenderness, and there are moments when our souls, as if freed

> from their dark envelope, glow with an exquisite sensibility that makes certain silences more lucid than speeches." (261)

Marlow himself comments a few pages later, that "one does not require much imagination to see the scene, almost to hear their whispers" (267), and it appears Marlow has more than the requisite amount.

To Marlow, just as to his listeners, Patusan feels like a land outside time, bound in stasis, unchanging. Marlow states on the occasion of his leave-taking that "as to what I was leaving behind, I cannot imagine any alteration" (284). Similar to the land itself, the people Marlow meets in Patusan give the impression of just stepping out of a story. Just like the characters of traditional adventure stories, the inhabitants of Patusan appear to be more easily described than their European counterparts. Unlike for example Brierly, or indeed Jim, who proves hard to understand, Marlow seems able to sum up the natives' life and purpose in a few short words. Importantly, they also appear to be defined by the relation to Jim.

> The immense and magnanimous Doramin and his little motherly witch of a wife, gazing together upon the land and nursing secretly their dreams of parental ambition; Tunku Allang, wizened and greatly perplexed; Dain Waris, intelligent and brave, with his faith in Jim, with his firm glance and his ironic friendliness; the girl, absorbed in her frightened, suspicious adoration; Tamb' Itam, surly and faithful; Cornelius, leaning his forehead against the fence under the moonlight—I am certain of them. They exist as if under an enchanter's wand. (284)

To Marlow, Jim seems to be the only one truly alive in *Patusan*, and the "the figure round which all these are grouped". Unlike the natives, Marlow says he is "not certain of him. No magician's wand can immobilize him under my eyes. He is one of us" (ibid.). That Jim is the only one able to change, the one whose fate seems uncertain, could feasibly be analyzed as Marlow propagating an imperial worldview where the natives of the various colonial areas are denied their primacy as human beings and instead serve as background or archetypes. This depiction could invite readings similar to Achebe's criticism of the racism he sees in *Heart of Darkness*. However, I think the apparent shallowness of the characters in Patusan serves another purpose.

What happens during the Patusan section of the book can in my opinion be explained by the concept of what John Frow calls "framing", as introduced in the genre theory discussion in my introduction. Returning to Frow's explanation, each genre can be said to "frame the world as a certain kind of thing" (93). Thus, the discerning reader is able to recognize clues in the framing of the world, and from this know what genre a text he or she

reads belongs to. This knowledge in turn activates particular expectations concerning the texts' thematic content as well as its rhetorical and formal features. A reader expecting a traditional *Bildungsroman* from the framing of the first section of *Lord Jim* would be surprised (and maybe either delighted or let down) when it turns out that Conrad has no intention of keeping within the boundaries of that genre.

Frow notes that framing is only ever really noticed when it comes into contact with other frames, at what he calls "intersections with other subcultures of meaning" (93). This is exactly what happens in *Lord Jim*. By returning to the more traditional narrative at the end, Conrad surrounds the highly complex and fragmentary middle of the book with more traditional bookends. This, at least to my mind, tends to accentuate the narrative modernism of the middle section, throwing it into relief.

The question then becomes what the effects of this unorthodox use of framing are, and what they suggest for the genre of the adventure story? I think these kinds of shifts certainly make the reader notice the difference framing can put on a story. This may in its own right contribute to the destabilization of imperial discourse. By slipping in and out of simple or more complex frames, Conrad shows what the difference in framing can do to the tale told, demonstrating to his readers that a deeper, more psychological reading may be found behind even the most traditional story. Thus, while some critics might have seen Conrad's apparent regression into romance in Patusan as a failure, I suggest that it can rather be seen as Conrad writing the tradition he is breaking with, whose constituents he is both deconstructing and reconstructing, into his own modernist tale. Conrad's approach raises the question of whether the depth of a story is a function of the way it is told, rather than of its plot. Does every traditional romance hide a story and characters that are as complex as *Lord Jim*'s? These questions in turn open new avenues for challenging typical adventure story concepts like heroism or victory for example, defying the monopoly pro-imperialist discourse had had on these concepts, serving as the basis of the story imperialist Britain told itself.

However, I would also like to draw attention to that there are instances, even in the Patusan section, where the 'flat' characters seem to attempt to break out of their flatness, offering worldviews that do not seem to conform completely to the ones they might be expected to have in a traditional adventure story. An example of this is the marked contrast between Doramin's weary and cynical summation of the white man's role among the natives, and Ignosi's plead to Quatermain and his cohorts to stay among them. The latter is reproduced below:

> What have I done to you, Incubu, Macumazahn, and Bougwan, that ye should leave me desolate? Ye who stood by me in rebellion and in battle, will ye leave me in the day of peace and victory? What will ye—wives? Choose from among the maidens! A place to live in? Behold, the land is yours as far as ye can see. […] If there is anything more which I can give, that will I give you." (Haggard 189)

While Ignosi views the white men as idealistic saviours (though not as gods, as less "enlightened" natives are often shown to believe in adventure fiction) and offers them everything he has to persuade them to stay, Doramin's view of the white man is instead best described as fatalistic:

> The land remains where God had put it; but white men—he said—they come to us and in a little while they go. They go away. Those they leave behind do not know when to look for their return. They go to their own land, to their people, and so this white man too would. . . . (234)

For Doramin, the white man is not to be counted on. They come and go of their own accord, and it seems there is little "those they leave behind" can do to influence that, either way. For such a romantic place as Patusan this is certainly a very realistic view of the white man's role in the East.

Jim's Story – a Partial Quest

The next section of this chapter will attempt to explore what I see as one of Conrad's major concerns in *Lord Jim*: to provide alternate endings to familiar beginnings. Before I move on to the subversion presented by the sub-stories of the secondary characters, I want to consider a side of Jim' story which indeed seems to be the main subversion of the adventure story formula in the book, namely his denial of the third prong of the quest structure, the return home.

Jim does not wish to return home from the wilderness where he has proved himself. Unlike Quatermain and Marlow, or even Kurtz whose belongings at least are brought home, Jim never returns from Patusan. Additionally, his final message to the world is cut short, ending in midsentence.

> "An awful thing has happened," he wrote before he flung the pen down for the first time; […] "I must now at once . . ." The pen had spluttered, and that time he gave it up. There's nothing more; he had seen a broad gulf that neither eye nor voice could span. (293)

Marlow speculates that Jim had perhaps at the end perceived the futility of words, ironically for a man who for so long has defined his self-image by the words of his literary heroes. However, long before that, already at being offered the opportunity to take over Stein's trading post in the middle of nowhere, Jim seems determined that he will not return. "Remain? Why! Of course. He would hang on. Let him only get in—that's all; he would answer for it he would remain. Never get out. It was easy enough to remain. […] (202). At this point, Jim mainly sees Patusan as a means of escaping his shameful past, but once there his reasons for not returning become more complex.

I think Jim becomes captured by his need to be respected. It is in Patusan that Jim finally proves to himself that he is "all right, anyhow" (211), and this is exactly the reason why he cannot leave. He has finally found a place where he is trusted by every man, woman, and child. Unlike Quatermain, who is more than happy to return home after having restored order in Kukuanaland, Jim has nothing to return home to. Marlow notes that

> "[..] all his conquests, the trust, the fame, the love, all these things that made him master had made him captive too. He looked at an owner's eye at the peace of the evening, at the river, at the houses, at the everlasting life of the forests, at the life of old mankind, at the secrets of the land, at the pride of his own heart; but it was they that possessed him and made him their own to the innermost thought, to the slightest stir of blood, to his last breath. (212)

Patusan is even more important to Jim's peace of mind than Jim is to Patusan's social order. The country has offered him rehabilitation, but, for Jim at least, if not for Marlow, his redemption only lasts as long as he stays there. Strangely, when Jim finds freedom from the past that has been chasing him, it is in captivity. Marlow also comments on this: "In fact, Jim the leader was a captive in every sense. The land, the people, the friendship, the love, were like the jealous guardians of his body. Every day added a link to the fetters of that strange freedom" (225).

While Jim wants to stay in his self-imposed exile, others find his decision strange. Perhaps, because his decision to such a large degree clashes with the notion of the European hero, who returns home after having fulfilled his quest and put the land in order. Doramin, the old chief, has a secret ambition for his son to take over the throne when Jim leaves Patusan and wishes to obtain a promise to that effect. Both he and his wife become curious and troubled when Marlow hints that Jim does not plan to leave. Jim's decision flies in the face not only of every convention of the quest structure, but also everything Doramin and his wife

know about the ways of white men, as detailed in the previous section. “They come to us and in a little while they go” (234).

Jewel also has a hard time believing that Jim does not mean to leave her, and that the larger world outside does not want him back. She seems unable to accept both Jim and Marlow’s assurances, and even when given the reasons why Jim will not return, she cannot accept them as true. Of course, with cruel irony, by the end of the story she is the one who pleads with Jim to leave and go back to the outside world. However, when Jim at last leaves her it is through the act of staying, willingly facing the bullet that kills him.

Jim’s decision never to return home negates both the formula of the quest, where the quest is incomplete without some sort of a homecoming, and the myriad examples from adventure fiction where the hero is only too happy to return home after having completed his quest. While Quatermain and company restores order in the lost world they find and then return home, Jim has nothing to return home with, as the goal of his quest only exists in the world of Patusan.

Subversive Hero Trajectories -the Perfect Captain, the Retired Hero, the Pirate and the “Gentleman”

Jim’s story is only one of the subversions of the typical character arc of the adventure story in the book. The next section will attempt to detail some of the other character arcs found in the novel, and what function they may serve.

Andrea White suggests that Conrad in his Marlow trilogy seems interested in tracing different trajectories for the hero of the adventure story:

> “*Heart of Darkness*” provides a foil to those heroic ideals of the dominant fiction, embraced by the young Marlow and by Jim. While Jim plays out a possible fate of the young Marlow, “*Heart of Darkness*” rehearses another, and in doing so, expresses a distanced skepticism of the professed heroic ideals in Marlow who has learned to distrust and reject the generic definitions of heroism; in Kurtz, who also sets out with some ideals” we get still another possible trajectory of a course mapped out by a dangerously illusionary idealism.” (171)

By providing these alternate arcs, Conrad both shows that the well-intentioned hero of the adventure story does not necessarily meet with a happy ending, and warns of the dangers of illusionary idealism. White mentions both Kurtz’s and Marlow’s character trajectories in *Heart of Darkness* as variations of the adventure story plot, and to my mind *Lord Jim* provides even more of these subverted hero quests. Many of the comparatively minor

characters introduced represent their own version of the familiar formula. In addition to Jim's own story, the reader is presented with the stories of Stein, whose youth reads like the typical adventure story, as well as the story of Chester and Robinson, seamen who probably started out with ideals like Marlow's and Jim's, but who end up as little more than pirates. The stories of the perfect captain Brierly and the despicable, but unlucky "Gentleman" Brown in their own way also provide interesting foils to Jim's story.

The tale of the successful captain Brierly who ends up with taking his own life is to me one of the most intriguing stories of the book. In my opinion it is a striking adventure story subversion, showing one possible trajectory for the adventure hero after he has climbed to the top. In introducing this story to his audience, Marlow begins: "Big Brierly. Some of you must have heard of Big Brierly- the captain of the crack ship of the Blue Star line." He goes on:

> He had never in his life made a mistake, never had an accident, never a mishap, never a check in his steady rise, and he seemed to be one of those lucky fellows who know nothing of indecision, much less of self-mistrust. At thirty-two he had one of the best commands going in the Eastern trade—and, what's more, he thought a lot of what he had. […] The rest of mankind that did not command the sixteen-knot steel steamer Ossa were rather poor creatures. He had saved lives at sea, had rescued ships in distress, had a gold chronometer presented to him by the underwriters, and a pair of binoculars with a suitable inscription from some foreign Government, in commemoration of these services. He was acutely aware of his merits and of his rewards. (48)

Even though he lacks the customary humbleness (though put-on as it sometimes may be) and jolly air of camaraderie of the typical adventure story hero, Brierly's résumé reads like archetypal wish-fulfilment fiction. However, Marlow's comment that "his self-satisfaction presented to me and to the world a surface as hard as granite" is undercut by the very next sentence, which simply states: "He committed suicide very soon after" (49).

While there for Jim's successes, in Marlow's words, "were no externals" (193), Captain Brierly's story turns the situations upside down. His successes were definitely external, imparting him with admirers across the colonial world. His failings, though, seem to be solely internal, so much so that his sudden death seems inexplicable to everybody. While the motivations for his suicide remain private, there is something about Jim's trial that appears to trouble Brierly. In his last conversation with Marlow, Brierly is in a, for him, uncommon state of irritation. In Brierly's mind it would be better for Jim to run away or even kill himself, than "eat all that dirt", and he does not share Marlow's view that there is a "kind of courage in

facing it out". In fact Brierly states that "that sort of courage is of no use to keep a man straight, and I don't care a snap for such courage" (56). Brierly finds Jim's conduct an affront to the entirety of English sailors, and thinks it jeopardizes their position in the world. It is not the lives Jim put in danger that troubles him, but that is should be known that an English officer had done so. The following quote illustrates this:

> "We are trusted. Do you understand?—trusted! Frankly, I don't care a snap for all the pilgrims that ever came out of Asia, but a decent man would not have behaved like this to a cargo of old rags in bales. We aren't an organized body of men, and the only thing that holds us together is just the name for that kind of decency." (57)

Though Brierly appears mostly concerned about the image of English sailors projected to the world, Marlow seems to imply that Brierly is uncertain of what he would have done if he were put in Jim's situation. Marlow suggests that Brierly during the case against Jim held "silent inquiry into his own case. The verdict must have been of unmitigated guilt, and he took the secret of the evidence with him in that leap into the sea." Did Brierly have something to hide in his past? Did the uncertainty of not knowing how he would react, put in Jim's place, drive him to despair? The answer remains elusive, but if the latter is true Brierly's suicide is an act of cowardice that made sure he never would have to find out what he would have done, allowing him to keep his belief in "his own splendour". A splendour, which according to Marlow "had almost cheated his life of its legitimate terrors. Almost! Perhaps wholly. Who can tell what flattering view he had induced himself to take of his own suicide?" (54).

It is a sort of literary irony that the perfect captain chooses to end his successful career and ostensibly model life with a leap into the sea, when a leap into the sea is the very action that denies Jim the opportunities to obtain the same life and career. In the end, Jim dies redeemed in his own eyes, while the exact opposite is implied for Brierly. In Brierly, Conrad then provides the reader with a powerful foil to Jim. While Jim's failures were well-known and his successes, such as they be, internal, it seems Brierly's successes were external, but his failures known only to himself.

One of the strategies that serve to undermine the traditional heroic adventure story arc in *Lord Jim* is following the life trajectories of the 'heroes' further than is common in other adventure stories. By doing this, stories that might seem like traditional successful adventure stories if they ended right after their protagonist's greatest moments of glory, instead take on other aspects, often of melancholy or hopelessness. While this is true for Brierly's story, it is equally if not more evident in the story of Marlow's old friend Stein. The story of Stein's

early life, as recounted by Marlow, reads like a traditional adventure story, something Marlow even comments on to his audience when introducing him: “His history was curious” (174). It is telling that, rather than telling Stein’s successful adventure story at book length, Conrad chooses to use it as a background to see Jim’s story against. From Marlow’s succinct, though characteristically reflective, summary, Stein’s life certainly appears to have contained enough remarkable incidents to propel a more traditional adventure story:

> He had been born in Bavaria, and when a youth of twenty-two had taken an active part in the revolutionary movement of 1848. Heavily compromised, he managed to make his escape, and at first found a refuge with a poor republican watchmaker in Trieste. From there he made his way to Tripoli with a stock of cheap watches to hawk about,—not a very great opening truly, but it turned out lucky enough, because it was there he came upon a Dutch traveller—a rather famous man, I believe, but I don't remember his name. It was that naturalist who, engaging him as a sort of assistant, took him to the East. They travelled in the Archipelago together and separately, collecting insects and birds, for four years or more. Then the naturalist went home, and Stein, having no home to go to, remained with an old trader he had come across in his journeys in the interior of Celebes—if Celebes may be said to have an interior. (ibid.)

Marlow then details how Stein becomes the old Scottish trader’s heir, a friend to the queen of the Wajo States, and companion to one of her younger sons, Mohammed Bolso, in a war of succession. Stein’s story is typical of the adventure story, since both pluck and luck played a part in Stein’s successes. However, Stein proves himself equal to his luck at every turn, and most importantly, he never falters or shirks from the events he finds himself involved in. In some ways he becomes a sort of folk hero, having stories being told about him, anticipating the stories being told about Jim in Patusan decades later.

> They both [Stein and Bolso] became the heroes of innumerable exploits; they had wonderful adventures, and once stood a siege in the Scotsman's house for a month, with only a score of followers against a whole army. I believe the natives talk of that war to this day. Meantime, it seems, Stein never failed to annex on his own account every butterfly or beetle he could lay hands on. (175)

Up to this point, Stein’s story, almost unbelievably romantic as it is, conforms to the trajectory mapped out for many adventure story heroes. Stein himself tells Marlow of a particularly memorable butterfly hunt, where he chases of seven rascals, killing three of them, reaching what to him feels like the apex of his life until then:

‘”Yes my good friend. On that day I had nothing to desire; I had greatly annoyed my principal enemy; I was young, strong; I had friendship; I had the love” (he said “lof”) “of a woman, a child I had, to make my heart very full – and even what I had once dreamed in my sleep had come into my hand too!” (179)

Had Marlow chosen to not recount the rest of Stein’s story, and instead ended it at this point, it would have been a great example of the typical adventure story, which follows the hero up until his great moment of glory. However, rather than living happily ever after, Stein’s story takes a dark turn. ‘He struck a match, which flared violently. His thoughtful placid face twitched once. ‘”Friend, wife, child,” he said slowly, gazing at the small flame, “phoo!” The match was blown out (171). The meaning seems clear. Stein loses everything – the lives of his wife, friend and child are blown out like a match. Marlow recounts Stein’s downfall in more detail, but interestingly then continues by narrating the way Stein manages to rebuild his life, now enjoying material successes if not romantic ones.

It seems that, despite his misfortunes, Stein is still the same romantic. When Marlow comes to Stein seeking advice about how best to help Jim, he quickly diagnoses Jim, correctly, as a fellow hopeless romantic. Stein’s background seems eminently suitably for understanding Jim, but the solution he offers troubles Marlow. Stein advises that the only way to live is to keep following the dream, “and again to follow the dream—and so—ewig—usque ad finem” (182). In Stein’s case, romanticism, or idealism, has been a positive force in his life. His pronouncement though, leaves Marlow uneasy; he describes how “the whisper of his conviction seemed to open before me a vast and uncertain expanse” (ibid.). While idealism has proved positive in Stein’s case, Marlow seems to know that it is not always so, and that few things can be as dangerous as unchecked idealism.

The ending of the novel is also concerned with the fallout of Jim’s idealism and indirectly Stein’s advise. When Jewel first arrives at Stein’s home, bearing the bad news from Patusan, Stein tries to console her. Still a romantic at heart, he is well-equipped to understand Jim’s sacrifice, and struggles to make Jewel see the reasons for it and forgive him for leaving her. Jewel, however, is unable to comprehend why Jim did not fight and claims he was false, something which greatly upsets Stein.

And suddenly Stein broke in. "No! no! no! My poor child! . . ." He patted her hand lying passively on his sleeve. "No! no! Not false! True! True! True!" He tried to look into her stony face. "You don't understand. Ach! Why you do not understand? . . . Terrible," he said to me. "Some day she *shall* understand." (301)

By the very end of the book, however, it seems Jewel still has not understood or forgiven Jim, as she continues to lead "a sort of soundless, inert life in Stein's house" (360). Maybe, the strength of her feelings has forced Stein to acknowledge the cost of idealism as well, as he according to Marlow "has aged greatly of late. He feels it himself, and says often that he is 'preparing to leave all this; preparing to leave . . .' while he waves his hand sadly at his butterflies" (ibid.). I will return to ending of the novel in the last section of this chapter.

Two other foils to Jim's heroic arc are found in the stories of Chester and Robinson. Chester is introduced as "a fellow I knew slightly, a West Australian; […] He had been a pearler, wrecker, trader, whaler too, I believe; in his own words—anything and everything a man may be at sea, but a pirate" (136). Like Marlow, Chester is interested in Jim. But while Marlow wants to help Jim redeem himself, Chester wants to put him to work. Where Marlow is a thoughtful man, given to rumination on finding the right path, Chester sees himself as being utterly practical. He takes pride in seeing things for what they are, and according to himself he puts no great weight on the cancellation of certificates, as long as it does not hamper work.

> He looked knowingly after Jim."Takes it to heart?" he asked scornfully. "Very much," I said. "Then he's no good," he opined. "What's all the to-do about? A bit of ass's skin. That never yet made a man. You must see things exactly as they are—if you don't, you may just as well give in at once. You will never do anything in this world. Look at me. I made it a practice never to take anything to heart. (137).

Chester's ideal – practicality, or *savoir faire* – is of course also the ideal of the adventure hero, as discussed in the second chapter, but it appears Chester, like Jim, fails to live up to his self-image. Though Chester deems himself a man who sees things as they are, the irony is that in his own way he is no less an idealist than Jim. He makes big plans and schemes, but fails to take reality (such as the fact that it hardly ever rains on the Walpole reef, where he wants to place Jim as his foreman in a guano extraction operation) into account. Just like his supposed "gold-mine", Chester is full of shit.

Along with Chester is Robinson, an old smuggler, who provides another possible model for Jim's continued existence at sea. In common with Marlow and Chester, Robinson has spent his life as a mariner. However, he has never been troubled by crossing the law, according to Chester having "smuggled more opium and bagged more seals in his time than any loose Johnny now alive. […] Holy-Terror Robinson. That's the man" (137). There are even stories of Robinson (perhaps in a delightful subversion of the classic survival story

featuring a protagonist of the same name) turning cannibal after a shipwreck, being the sole survivor of seven that got ashore. However, according to Chester, "three weeks afterwards [being saved] he was as well as ever" (138). Chester's description of the way Robinson handled the aftermath of his supposed cannibalism, presents the reader with his outlook on the world, and on what he thinks Jim should do.

> "He didn't allow any fuss that was made on shore to upset him; he just shut his lips tight, and let people screech. It was bad enough to have lost his ship, and all he was worth besides, without paying attention to the hard names they called him. That's the man for me." (138)

Following Robinson's example, Jim's fall from grace should not upset him too much. When Marlow sees Robinson, though, it becomes clear that he is not the man he used to be, but just another adventure story (anti)hero past his prime. Holy–Terror Robinson in his old age is just as deaf and senile as any other man, "an emaciated patriarch in a suit of white drill" with a "head trembling with age" who blinks "his creased eyelids [..] in a bewildered way"(138). Chester is misusing Robinson, only bringing him into his scheme because "he's got a little money". As Chester leaves Marlow in anger, he shouts to Robinson to come, upon which in Marlow's words "the Holy Terror gave a submissive little jump" (142), the final undercutting of his once larger-than-life persona. Chester's inability or unwillingness to see Robinson as what he is, an old man, no longer the terror of anything, further undercuts his supposed realist outlooks. Like those of the other idealists of the book, Chester's fate is not a happy one, as the last Marlow ever hears of him "was the news of a hurricane which is supposed to have swept in its course over the Walpole shoals, a month or so afterwards. Not a vestige of the Argonauts ever turned up" (149).

That it is "Gentleman Brown" who incites the events that lead to Jim's death is not without irony. The "latter-day buccaneer" and supposed son of a baronet Captain Brown is in many ways a dark twin to Jim. Brown's life story again appears to be rich enough to sustain more than one traditional adventure story. In fact, his life appears to be the subject of a number of stories, told all along the coast of Australia, the mildest of which "was more than enough to hang a man if told in the right place" (303). Though famous for his "vehement scorn for mankind at large" (ibid.) and his reckless daring, Gentleman Brown, like most of the rest of the 'heroes' presented in these sub-stories, is down on his luck by the time of the events of *Lord Jim*. His appearance in Patusan is down to chance, as he desperately looks for a place to provision a stolen schooner he does not dare to take to port. Marlow comments that

Brown has an uncanny ability to figure out people's strong and weak points. With Jim's background, Brown is possibly the worst adversary he ever could have met, as he leads Jim to doubt himself again, and fools him into letting him go.

> When he asked Jim, with a sort of brusque despairing frankness, whether he himself—straight now—didn't understand that when "it came to saving one's life in the dark, one didn't care who else went—three, thirty, three hundred people"—it was as if a demon had been whispering advice in his ear. […] He asked Jim whether he had nothing fishy in his life to remember that he was so damnedly hard upon a man trying to get out of a deadly hole by the first means that came to hand—and so on, and so on. (334)

When Jim asks Brown why he came to Patusan he answers, "I am here because I was afraid once in my life. You know what of? Of a prison. [..] I won't ask you what scared you into this infernal hole, where you seem to have found pretty pickings" (330). Even though Brown does not now of Jim's secret shame, his leering ways make Jim believe he does:

> And there ran through the rough talk a vein of subtle reference to their common blood, an assumption of common experience; a sickening suggestion of common guilt, of secret knowledge that was like a bond of their minds and of their hearts." (334)

By instinctively appealing to the similarities between his situation and the incident that has troubled Jim for so long, "Gentleman" Brown is able to secure free passage, and sets into motions the events that will lead to Jim's demise at his friend's hand.

The minor character stories discussed over these last few pages serve dual functions. First, they each provide a subversive variant on the standard heroic story typical of the genre. Conrad seems to suggest that just because a young man sets out with courage and pluck and the best idealistic intentions, he will not necessarily end up like the heroes of Marryat's sea stories, or even as Quatermain in *King Solomon's Mines*. Second, these stories collectively constitute a background for Jim to stand out against. Unlike Chester, Jim feels the need to be respected by his peers, and for that reason is unable to settle for a life as less than a gentleman, even though the notion of gentility is constantly undermined and shown to be empty words through Marlow's narration. Unlike Brierly, Jim is by the end able to overcome that character trait within himself which prevents him from living up to his ideals. Unlike Stein or Robinson, whose stories continue well past their heyday, Jim's story ends in the blaze of glory that he seems to have wanted all along. He dies on his own terms, with a "proud and unflinching gaze" (360) on his face. Whether his death constitutes a victory or a loss is one of the things that will be discussed in the final part of this chapter.

"Identi-fiction" – the Adventure Story and Self-image

As we have seen, Conrad in *Lord Jim* provides his readers with multiple variations of the adventure story plot, subverted or partially fulfilled. In addition, I would claim that Conrad interacts with the genre in a more complex fashion by making Jim's internalization of the adventure story hero's characteristics and his status as an adventure hero manqué a part of the fictional world. This provides a self-awareness of generic tropes within the adventure story framework and presents the opportunity for the genre to comment on itself. The final part of this chapter will explore how Jim's conception of himself is a result of the prevalence of imperially sanctioned adventure stories. Does Jim's death, in an effort to live up to his book-derived ideals, make him a victim of imperial discourse?

I previously mentioned that Conrad's works often have an elegiac or nostalgic air about them, owing to Conrad's belief that the time of heroism had passed (White 108). This quality is especially apparent in *Lord Jim.* It is telling that except for Jim's feats in Patusan, all of the events that may be seen as worthy of heroic praise in *Lord Jim* are set in the past and recounted by Marlow as history, rather than news. Indeed, one of the things about Jim's finale that seems most incredible to Marlow is that it happened just two years before he writes it down: "You repeat this to yourself while you marvel that such a thing could happen in the year of grace before last" (295). Jim's determination, or even compulsion, to be a hero may for that reason also be seen as anachronistic, and even more of a folly, since it seems both the implied author and Marlow reckon the time of heroism has passed.

Jim's thirst for adventure is made clear from the very beginning of the story. The omniscient third-person narrator's recollections of Jim's days in training show that he has a special life in mind for himself.

> His station was in the fore-top, and often from there he looked down, with the contempt of a man destined to shine in the midst of dangers, at the peaceful multitude of roofs cut in two by the brown tide of the stream [...]. He could see the big ships departing, the broad-beamed ferries constantly on the move, the little boats floating far below his feet, with the hazy splendour of the sea in the distance, and the hope of a stirring life in the world of adventure. (3)

Jim appears to have read a lot of adventure stories of the traditional kind, and when he imagines his future life at sea it is not the often uneventful and monotonous life of the daily work aboard a steamer he pictures, but rather circumstances and scenarios derived from adventure fiction, or "light literature", as in the following passage:

> On the lower deck in the babel of two hundred voices he would forget himself, and beforehand live in his mind the sea-life of light literature. He saw himself saving people from sinking ships, cutting away masts in a hurricane, swimming through a surf with a line; or as a lonely castaway, barefooted and half naked, walking on uncovered reefs in search of shellfish to stave off starvation. He confronted savages on tropical shores, quelled mutinies on the high seas, and in a small boat upon the ocean kept up the hearts of despairing men—always an example of devotion to duty, and as unflinching as a hero in a book . (3)

Jim constantly seems to model himself on these book heroes. Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan introduces the term *identi-fiction* to describe what is happening. In her definition the term "denotes a literary text or genre on which a fictional character construes his or her identity" (39). In Jim's case, it appears clear that his identi-fiction is the traditional adventure story. The genre provides the point of reference in the creation Jim's identity and in the management of his life (Vulcan 39).

It is ironic that at the time when his chance to be a hero appears, when a coaster crashes through a schooner at anchor in heavy winds, he is in the middle of one of his reveries. Preoccupied with his dreams, Jim fails to mount a rescue mission until somebody else has acted: "Jim felt his shoulder gripped firmly. 'Too late, youngster.' The captain of the ship laid a restraining hand on that boy, who seemed on the point of leaping overboard, and Jim looked up with the pain of conscious defeat in his eyes" (5). However, when Jim is no longer able to be the hero, the perceived danger of the situation seems to decrease for him. He rationalizes away what others might see as his inability to react quickly to a dangerous situation, instead turning it around in his mind, and now claims the situation was not dangerous *enough* to be worthy of his intervention.

> The tumult and the menace of wind and sea now appeared very contemptible to Jim, increasing the regret of his awe at their inefficient menace. Now he knew what to think of it. It seemed to him he cared nothing for the gale. He could affront greater perils. He would do so—better than anybody. Not a particle of fear was left. Nevertheless he brooded apart that evening while the bowman of the cutter—a boy with a face like a girl's and big grey eyes—was the hero of the lower deck. Eager questioners crowded round him. He narrated: […] Jim thought it a pitiful display of vanity. (5)

For Linda Dryden Jim's paralysis and failure to fulfil his romantic ideal in this instance "prefigure his later failure on the *Patna*" (141). She also argues that Conrad from the opening of the novel supplies the reader with clues that Jim may not be able to live up to the heroic forebears he idealizes, citing Jim being "an inch, perhaps two under six feet" (Lord Jim 1) as a "significant shortfall" for the romantic hero (Dryden 141). Consequently, when the first real

testing event of his life occurs on the *Patna*, these small subversions have already indirectly hinted to the reader that "Jim's imagination is stronger than his character" (Dryden 142).

Erdinast-Vulcan claims that Jim replaces his identi-fiction of "the Stevensonian adventure story" after it failed him on the Patna. Instead she sees the heroic epic serving as the "prototext of the Patusan episode" (39). This, one supposes, is done to support her reading of the Patusan incident as a willed regression to a pre-modern frame of ethical and aesthetic reference that she sees as a realization of Conrad's need to "counteract modernity" (22). I am not sure I agree with her assertion that Jim replaces his identi-fiction. For the purposes of this thesis at least, I think the Patusan section and Jim's action there can be illuminated by the continued link to the adventure story genre.

Even after his fall from grace on board the *Patna*, there are instances where Jim continues to model himself on persons from adventure stories, or insists on viewing real life in terms of what Vulcan calls a "literary context" (37). An illustrative example is the way he seems to appreciate the story of Stein's life as if it were a book. Upon being presented with a ring from Stein that will help him deal with Doramin, he is also excited by the invocation of adventure story tropes. "The ring was a sort of credential ("it's like something you read of in books, he threw in appreciatively"), and Doramin would do his best for him" (199). When Jim comes to greet Marlow upon his arrival in Patusan, it also seems clear from his introduction of the new people he lives amongst, that Jim has continued to view his life in a literary context. He keeps viewing himself as a protagonist in an imaginary story.

> "It's well worth seeing," Jim had assured me while we were crossing the river, on our way back. *"They are like people in a book, aren't they?"* he said triumphantly. "And Dain Waris—their son—is the best friend (barring you) I ever had. What Mr. Stein would call a good 'war-comrade.' I was in luck. Jove! I was in luck when I tumbled amongst them at my last gasp (222, italics mine).

His view of being "in luck" also suggests that he self-identifies as what Bakhtin would deem an "adventuristic person", a person of chance whose life is influenced by the game of fate (Bakhtin 95). Marlow's comment to the privileged reader that Jim had used to say that both episodes and people had "come to him" (292), rather than the other way around, also support the notion of Jim seeing himself as a person who does not govern his own fate, instead being chosen or picked out by fate to meet the people he meets and experience the trials he does. Linda Dryden suggests "that Jim himself perpetuates the romance mode" of the Patusan section (137), and from the examples provided I tend to agree.

Jim's misguided relationship with fiction is also the object of a scene that could be sad, but instead becomes humorous by Marlow's description. On offering Jim a more suitable way of transporting his belongings to Patusan, Marlow observes Jim as he hastily moves his things to a tin-trunk:

> I saw three books in the tumble; two small, in dark covers, and a thick green-and-gold volume—a half-crown complete Shakespeare. "You read this?" I asked. "Yes. Best thing to cheer up a fellow," he said hastily. I was struck by this appreciation, but there was no time for Shakespearian talk. (203)

Andrea White labels Jim a "misreader of fiction". That Jim reads Shakespeare to cheer up is as striking to the reader as it is to Marlow, especially since at the same time he "takes his ideas of heroic conduct from the idealized protagonists of 'light holiday reading'" (171). Many would perhaps do it the other way around. White compares Jim to the young Marlow from Conrad's short story "Youth", noting that "both [stories] feature young, idealistic adventure seekers whose ideas of heroism have been shaped by various fictions" (ibid.). However, while Andrea White sees young Marlow's reading of "Burnaby to Byron" as providing "a sometimes comical contrast to his actual adventures" she finds that Jim's rowing of to Patusan armed with nothing but an unloaded revolver, "a half-crown complete Shakespeare" and two other small books in dark covers strikes a more "somber note" since "all are equally ineffective means of dealing with the actual events towards which Jim is rowing" (ibid.).

I have claimed that Jim in his admiration of adventure story heroics becomes a stand in for all the young readers of this type of fiction. As I detailed in chapter one, the popularity of the adventure story genre was enormous, and entire generations of young men were subjected to the notions expressed within these books. As these notions very often directly contradicted the realities of the imperial outposts the young men groomed by adventure stories were sent to, it is not only Jim who can be seen to be armed with "ineffective means" of dealing with the actual events towards which they are figuratively rowing. In my opinion, Jim's destiny raises questions about the dominant heroic ideals propagated in the adventure stories, and the wisdom of transmitting them to the younger generations.

While Jim's proud and unflinching death may appear a more suitable and traditional end for an adventure story hero than the troubles of old age that has beset Stein, the deathbed sickness of "Gentleman Brown", the unexplained suicide of Brierly or the murky disappearance of Chester and Robinson, Jim's heroic last stand is not allowed to stand

unopposed. Instead Conrad, and Marlow spends the last paragraphs of the book questioning Jim's ending and the ideals that led him to it. If Jim's final actions seem to redeem himself in his own eyes, Jewel, his woman, is unable to share his view. Marlow seems to be conflicted on the matter of Jim's death. On one hand, he recognizes Jim's belated success in living up to his ideals:

> And that's the end. He passes away under a cloud, inscrutable at heart, forgotten, unforgiven, and excessively romantic. Not in the wildest days of his boyish visions could he have seen the alluring shape of such an extraordinary success! For it may very well be that in the short moment of his last proud and unflinching glance, he had beheld the face of that opportunity which, like an Eastern bride, had come veiled to his side. (360)

On the other hand, Marlow presents the fallout among those who knew and loved Jim, and suggests that Jim's heroic end in some ways is utterly egoistic:

> 'But we can see him, an obscure conqueror of fame, tearing himself out of the arms of a jealous love at the sign, at the call of his exalted egoism. He goes away from a living woman to celebrate his pitiless wedding with a shadowy ideal of conduct. Is he satisfied—quite, now, I wonder? (ibid.)

The word choice where Jim "tears himself out of the arms" of a love to celebrate a "pitiless wedding" seems to bespeak a heroic deed in their own right, but I think it is the reasons for doing so that Marlow questions. In doing what he does, Jim chooses a "shadowy ideal" over a living person that needs him, and this indeed seems the ultimate expression of egoism. Did Jim save anything else by his final act than his own sense of pride? That Jim, as Marlow constantly states, is "one of us," gives his questions about "shadowy ideals" a larger reach. Jim through his death becomes an embodiment of the ideals touted in adventure fiction and travel literature. Jim remains an anti-hero, and perhaps somebody fit for sympathy rather than admiration. His example, however, challenges the heroic ideals of adventure fiction, questioning the worldview that allowed these ideals to flourish and exposing the dangers of accepting them outright.

Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with the subversion of the adventure story genre and imperial worldview in Conrad's *Lord Jim,* as expressed through various features of the text.

In the first section, I have claimed that the large discrepancy between the narrative styles of the different parts of the novel should be seen as a narrative success rather than a failure. I have suggested how the shift or modulation into a more romance-like prose in the Patusan section draws attention to the issue of framing. I have claimed that by highlighting how the framing influences the reader's perception of the story told, Conrad shows how the certainty that is characteristic of imperial discourse, is a choice of presentation that may conceal an underlying complexity.

In the second part of this chapter I have discussed how Jim's stated wish never to return from his proving ground undermines the quest structure. Additionally, I have shown how some of the side-stories in the book, while providing background for Jim's story, also constitute their own miniature adventure stories, and how each supplies its own subversions of the standard character arc of the adventure story protagonist. I have claimed that one of the strategies Conrad utilizes to this purpose is following the arc longer than would be typical, letting the stories fizzle out into illness or old age, rather than ending them with their protagonist's greatest achievement.

The third part of this chapter has looked at the ways in which the conventions of the adventure story genre inform the construction of Jim's self image and worldview. I have claimed that Jim throughout his life defined himself by the heroic ideals provided by adventure stories similar to the ones discussed earlier on in this thesis. I have suggested that Jim's fate represents the fate of countless other young men like him who subscribed to the worldview of imperial discourse and thus were unprepared to meet the real world. I have claimed that Jim's fate questions the purpose the genre had been put to during the nineteenth century thus challenging the imperially sanctioned notions of heroism.

Conrad seems to have loved the genre of the adventure story, and in *Lord Jim,* I think he both provides the reader with an engrossing one (or the reconstruction of one), and a commentary on the entirety of the genre. Jim's character, and his inevitable fate, invite us to reflect on the way other people's stories shape our conceptions both of ourselves and the world. Throughout the novel, the notion of idealism is put under discussion. While to me neither Conrad nor Marlow dismiss completely that idealism can be a force for good, the ambiguous way in which Jim's death and its aftermath are handled shows that what constitutes a victory depends entirely on your point of view.

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Conclusion

> The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical (if his propensity to spin yarns be excepted), and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine (Heart of Darkness 5).

The reader may have wondered about the title "*One of these misty halos*", and the time has now come to reflect a little on why I chose this designation for my thesis .The perceptive reader may rightfully assume that it comes from one of the works discussed herein, and the Conrad aficionado recognizes it as one of the more well-known passages from *Heart of Darkness*, where it serves almost like a programme declaration for Marlow's particular brand of storytelling. The titular metaphor is part of a larger description that the frame narrator gives pertaining to Marlow's penchant for telling inconclusive stories, free of the easy moralizing and straightforward "insights" of the typical seaman's yarn.

Amongst the texts discussed in the pages of this thesis, I award *King Solomon's Mines* the dubious honour of being the nut cracked open. In the novel H. Rider Haggard employs a traditional adventure story style and structure to tell a tale with an easy moral and a certainty of what is right and wrong in the world, aligning with the imperially sanctioned way of seeing the power-relationship between the colonizer and the colonized.

The explanation of Marlow's untypical tales, then, to me also describes the uneasy, tentative and searching quality of Conrad's texts. Unlike most seamen, to whom nothing is mysterious "unless it be the sea itself" (5), Conrad, like Marlow, looks to the outside of an episode to find the meaning enveloping it. His concern is the misty halo that Marlow's tale brings out, visible for a short time and only noticeable through the ghostly light thrown onto it by a narrator in the know. While Haggard's book chiefly promotes the certainties of imperial discourse, Conrad's two books are concerned with ridding themselves of these certainties and introducing doubt and ambiguity into the equation.

My purpose in this thesis has been to answer the question: in which way can Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim* be seen to subvert the genre of the adventure story and undermine imperial discourse? I have answered, or at least discussed, the question by exploring significant ways in which elements of *Heart of Darkness and Lord Jim* differ from the typical generic characteristics of the adventure story. However, as I posited in my

introduction, the answers to the question have also necessitated a discussion of the links between imperial discourse and the adventure story, and an elaboration on what constitutes the traditional adventure story in *King Solomon's Mines*, my chosen counterpart to Conrad's text.

I began the first chapter by presenting an account of the emergence of the adventure story as well as the genre of travel writing. In the course of detailing important features of these related genres, I have shown how they by the nineteenth century mutually influenced each other. I have discussed how the continued expansion of empire was contingent on a willing "domestic subject" that supported the colonial effort abroad, and how travel literature was important for spreading the imperial worldview in which European intervention in uncivilized areas was seen to be mutually beneficial for European and native alike. This chapter has also shown that he adventure story was afforded a special status during the Victorian period, as a result of its similarities with the sanctioned travel writing. Finally, the first chapter demonstrated how adventure stories became a useful educational tool for the imperialist powers of England, since the heroic ideals of conduct and the notions of the relationship between the English and the Native in adventure stories typically mirrored those of official Britain. I have claimed that the adventure story genre contributed to 'grooming' young men for posts within the Imperial administration by making them susceptible to the kind of worldview required for the further spread of the British Empire,

The second chapter aimed to answer the question of what constitutes the typical adventure story by applying Frow's notion of the three dimensions that genres must be defined by – the formal, the rhetorical and the thematic – to Haggard's adventure story classic *King Solomon's Mines*. In the exploration of the formal dimension, I have found that the book's plot follows the typical quest structure almost to perfection, detailing a journey into the unknown, the defeat of a tyrant, and the return home with riches in store. I have also shown how Bakhtin's notion of "adventure time" is used in a way most typical of the genre. In the discussion of the thematic dimension of the book, I have shown how the characters both English and native, are presented in a way that corresponds to the typical notions professed by imperial discourse. The English appear blameless in their conduct, while the natives are described without any sense of agency, or either in animalistic (antagonists) or idealized (protagonists) terms. In considering the rhetorical dimension of *King Solomon's Mines*, I have found it to be informed by the narrator's wish to emulate the narration of travel literature and the authority afforded that genre's narrators. I have shown how Quatermain's narration inhabits the typical voice shared by many such adventure story narrators. Moreover, I have

detailed how the relationship between Quatermain and his readers can be seen to be typical of the genre and the instructive role it played during the era. While I have found some small thematic and narrative subversions in Haggard's text, I have shown how these either express Haggard's misgivings about British politics, or provide small in-jokes, without destabilizing the imperial notions expressed through the narrative in any particular way. I have suggested, though, that these subversions may be seen to point towards Conrad's genre experiments in *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim.*

The third chapter has detailed some of the many subversive qualities of *Heart of Darkness*, contrasting them with their more straightforward counterparts in *King Solomon's Mines.* I have explored how the quest structure becomes severely destabilized by the ways Marlow story diverts from the traditional formula. I have claimed that Marlow is not a typical adventure hero, in part because he is not an "adventuristic person". Rather, Marlow actively pursues to undertake his journey. That his quest lacks a clear goal from the outset also makes him untypical. Though Kurtz for a time comes to serve as Marlow's 'grail', I show how that notion too is subverted when they finally meet each other. In keeping with the comparative approach of the chapter, the discussion of the thematic dimension of *Heart of Darkness* has contrasted the notions of Englishness expressed within the text with those of *King Solomon's Mines.* I have shown how Conrad's text presents notions that do not comply with the illusionary presentations found in the traditional adventure stories. Both the 'civilizing mission' and the moral right of the European to rule the 'barbaric' native are exposed through Marlow's acerbic narration. Additionally, I have shown how Marlow's unanswered question about the cannibal's restraint may suggest an alternate way of perceiving the relationship between civilization and barbarism, one that is overlooked by Marlow because it appears invisible as a result of imperial discourse. I have also given examples of cultural relativism, exemplified by situations where Marlow attempts to understand the significance of the natives' drums or view the European invasion from the point of view of the native. In the final part of the chapter, I claim to have shown how the destabilization of the narrative situation of *Heart of Darkness* is not only the result of a more complex relationship between the reader and the story told, but also a consequence of Marlow's confrontational attitude and the dialogic nature of Conrad's text, where voices other than Marlow's appear free to provide counterpoints.

In the fourth chapter on *Lord Jim*, I have attempted to hang on to my thesis question as the relationship between the formulaic adventure story and Conrad's writing becomes increasingly complicated. In this chapter I have taken a step back from the direct comparisons

of the third chapter, and instead I focused on subversions that rely on an understanding of the society in which the texts were written and set. This chapter has shown how the large discrepancy between the narrative styles of the different parts of *Lord Jim* should be seen as a narrative success rather than a failure. My discussion has shown how the framing influences the reader's perception of the story told, and that Conrad through the act of drawing attention to framing exposes the characteristic certainty of imperial discourse as a facade which conceals an underlying complexity. I have also demonstrated how the quest structure in *Lord Jim* is undermined both by Jim's decision never to return home from his quest and by the inclusion of several small character vignettes that contain their own subversions of the typical adventure story. These stories, I have claimed, both provide background for Jim's quest and show alternate trajectories for the idealistic adventure hero where the happy ending is not a given. In the final part of the last chapter I have considered the way in which the heroic image of the adventure story hero, contributes to Jim's self-image, his failure to live up to it, and the consequences it entails for the other characters of the story. Following this, I suggest that Jim's fate may be seen to represent the fate of countless other young men like him, who subscribed to the worldview of imperial discourse and thus were unprepared to meet the real world. I claim that his untimely death, though in accord with the ideals of the adventure story fiction, challenges the notions of heroism and what constitutes a victory, topics that in imperial discourse seem self-evident.

Now looking back at the previous chapters, I find that two related questions have informed my discussion. What constitutes imperial discourse in the adventure story genre, and how do Conrad's texts undermine it? The guiding principle for my discussion has thus been to provide the necessary background for understanding the subversive nature of Conrad's texts. I have shown how the subversion of imperial discourse in *Heart of Darkness* primarily occurs through the twisting of familiar adventure story elements. Marlow's journey can be understood as a quest, but the framework is not a perfect fit, which leaves the reader with a story that is at once somewhat familiar in its use of the tropes and extremely unsettling. The point also applies to Marlow's narration, where notions that directly contradict the image of colonialism that the official powers wanted to put across are 'smuggled' in through Marlow's uncertain and questing narration like a Trojan horse. Marlow never condemns the practice of the colonial system outright, at least not the British, but his outlook constantly indicates problematic avenues of thought, that the reader, comfortable in his or her chair and enjoying an adventure story, perhaps would have preferred not to have prodded. The inclusion of alternate outlooks in the text – what Bakhtin calls a "dialogic" quality – is a new development

whose importance it is hard to overstate. Whereas the adventure story genre previously had served to propagate the consolidated and authorial voice of imperialism, Conrad shows that the genre also can express other notions. In this way *Heart of Darkness* simultaneously uses and undermines the genre of the adventure story.

The discussion of *Lord Jim* has shown how the subversions of the adventure story genre expand to include the concepts of heroism, and implicating the reader by making Jim a reader himself. On one hand, the subversions are more distant in this novel, as they often are systemic, rather than subversions of particular instances of genre tropes. On the other hand there is something about the way Jim is drawn that makes the subversions of his story easier to understand on a human level than Marlow's story in *Heart of Darkness*. By returning to an ostensibly more traditional story in the final section of *Lord Jim*, and exposing his framing by the abruptness of the shift, Conrad belies the banalities that often exist in the typical adventure story, thus warning against the dangers of viewing the world in idealist terms. As a result, the subversions of the adventure story and imperialism seem impossible to pry apart, since this is the point where the two interconnect.

An important issue which I briefly touched upon in my introduction is the very opportune moment for Conrad's particular way of questioning imperialism. The end of the Victorian era was the height of British imperialism, but also the tipping point where the problematic nature of the project became hard to conceal for the general public. At the same time, adventure stories and travel literature were still incredibly popular, and thus offered a way to destabilize imperialism using its own 'tools'. That Conrad was so avant-garde both in his style and outlook makes it hard to find peers for his particular brand of adventure story subversion, though some compatible notions may be found in the works of his contemporaries. The Argentine-born naturalist and writer W. H. Hudson's writing in the *The Purple Land That England Lost* (1885) *and Green Mansions: A Romance of the Tropical Forest* (1904), though perhaps closer to *King Solomon's Mines* in style, offer some thematic similarities; destabilizing the notions of Victorian England as the apex of civilization, and questioning the imperialist impulse to intervene in other territories. Aspects of Hudson's stories are interestingly linked to Conrad's *Nostromo* (1904). However, even after *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*, traditional adventure stories by far outnumbered subversive ones, with Rudyard Kipling and Haggard's production joined by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the American authors such as Edgar Rice Burroughs and Robert E. Howard.

By the time of modernist writers critique of imperialism, exemplified by Leonard Woolf's *The Village in the Jungle* (1913), Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1915), or even

George Orwell's *Burmese Days* (1934), the distance from the traditional adventure story has become greater, though the quest structure lingers as an echo to be subverted for example in Rachel Vinrace's Marlow-like interior journey in *The Voyage Out.* To my mind, neither of these books can be read as adventure stories in their own right and thus differ from Conrad's works, which though subverting the genre of the adventure story, also still belong to it. Tracing the links between these later, indirect uses of the adventure story formula in the modernist era and the imperial discourse of the earlier age would, however, be a most interesting continuation of my work in this thesis. Another avenue for expanding the thesis lies in the possible comparison with post-colonial works by the likes of Ngugi or Tayeb Salih, who, as I cited Said on in my introduction, appropriate both the quest structure and thematic concerns of the adventure story to their own ends.

While early on in my introduction I stated that discussing genre is a slippery slope, considering authorial intentions seems even more problematic. Nonetheless, that Conrad had strong misgivings about what he saw as a race for loot, disguised as a 'civilizing mission', and that this informs his writing on the subject matter, to me seems evident. To neglect to acknowledge the author's intentions completely would in my opinion be disingenuous. Although I think that the implicit criticism of empire in the texts discussed stands well on its own, I believe the acknowledgement that Conrad in all probability had a purpose in subverting the genre that he by all accounts loved so well, can only help strengthen his critique. Brantlinger has proposed that, for Conrad, the worst feature of imperialism may have been not the violence with which the project was accomplished but rather "the lying propaganda used to cover its bloody tracks" (*Rule of Darkness* 259). This thesis has shown how Conrad's subversion of the adventure story genre is a subversion of the "propaganda" that was used to perpetuate colonialism and impress the young minds of the future colonial administrators. By negating the dominant fiction and its simple and undifferentiated worldview, Conrad is also questioning the real world ideals proposed in this fiction.

As my thesis has demonstrated, *if* Conrad's purpose indeed was to topple imperialism, after having been shocked and horrified by some of the things he saw as a mariner in the service of European imperial powers, he could hardly have found a way more suited to his particular strengths. By subverting the adventure story genre, both the primary outlet for imperial discourse in Britain and a recruitment tool aimed at youth, Conrad's books undermined both the empire's continuous need for public support as well as its future propagation.

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